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THE

COURT AND REIGN

OF

FRANCIS THE FIRST,

King of France.

BY MISS PARDOE,

AUTHOR OF "LOUIS XIV." "THE CITY OF THE SULTAN," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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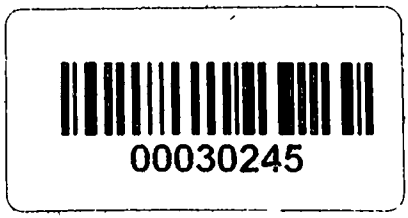

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THE COURT AND REIGN

OF

FRANCIS THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

[1524.]

The deaths of Bayard and Vandenesse were the greatest loss sustained by the French during the retreat, if we except that of the duchy itself, which was once more in the hands of the confederated sovereigns. As regarded the troops, few had fallen, although all had suffered greatly alike from fatigue and privation; yet when Bonnivet again crossed the French frontier, it was with the humiliating consciousness that his defeat had been more fatal to the interests of Francis than any by which it had been preceded in the Milanese. The retreat was also effected in such confusion that Bourbon and Pescara resolved to pursue the fugitives; but the jealousy of the Spanish general would not permit him to follow the advice of the duke, who suggested the expediency of pushing forward at once to the interior, declaring his conviction that, so soon as he should reach Bourbonnais,

Beaujolais, and Auvergne, all which countries had formerly been his own, the inhabitants would instantly join his standard. To this scheme Pescara, however, could not be induced to listen; and, accordingly, after much expostulation on the part of Bourbon, it was decided that their joint armies should proceed to the frontiers of Provence, where the pledge of the ex-connétable was to a certain degree redeemed; for not only did the lesser towns through which they passed receive him with little more than a mere show of resistance, and, at his suggestion, swear fidelity to the emperor; but even Aix, the capital of Provence, admitted him within its walls on the 9th of August; and ten days subsequently the confederated generals, with an army composed of seven thousand lansquenets, six thousand Spanish infantry, two thousand Italians, and six hundred light-horse, sat down before Marseilles.

Nor was even this formidable force the only one by which the besieged citizens were threatened, as M. de Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples, engaged shortly to follow with a body of six thousand cavalry; while Ugo de Moncada was to keep the whole army supplied with provisions and ammunition, which were to be conveyed by a fleet of sixteen gallies to the coast.

On ascertaining the strait to which the Marseillaise were reduced, Francis lost no time in despatching Brion Chabot (as he had previously done to the Parisians) to assure the citizens of effective aid; but, before he arrived, Lorenzo de Céri had already thrown himself into the town with the remnant of his battalion of Italian patriots, now reduced, however, to four thousand men,

and even those so worn by fatigue and wounds that few of them survived this new demand upon their energies.

On the departure of Bonnivet for Italy Francis had returned to Blois, where he, for the first time, exerted himself to regain the affections of the people who were indignant at the defection of Bourbon, which they justly attributed to his persecution by the court; and it was no sooner made known that he would be accessible to all petitions, than he was inundated with complaints against the soldiery and the fiscal agents. To the representations of the peasantry he replied by authorizing them to resist, even by violent measures, the rapine of the troops, to take possession of their own property wherever they might find it, and to deliver over the marauders to the provost-marshals when they chanced to fall into their hands. He next regulated and equalized the taxes; and, finally, he commanded that all funds raised in the provinces should be at once conveyed to Blois to meet the national exigencies; while he at the same time in some degree curtailed his personal expenses; ordaining that all presents which he might hereafter make in specie, should be paid only at the end of the year, after all the public accounts were settled; "excepting always;" said the ordonnance in conclusion; "the current outlay necessary to our own privy necsesities and pleasures."

The jeopardy of Marseilles, however, sufficed to arouse the king for a time from the selfish indulgences to which he was so painfully addicted. He had vainly endeavoured to doubt the advent of Bourbon into his very kingdom at the head of an army, but when at length he

was compelled to admit the fact, he hastily raised a corps of observation, instructed to harass the confederates by every means short of an engagement, which was to be carefully avoided. He moreover levied fourteen thousand foot and six thousand lansquenets in Switzerland, and divided them between François Duke de Lorraine and Richard de la Polè, together with fourteen or fifteen hundred cavalry. He also despatched *ad interim* the Maréchal de Chabannes, with orders to possess himself of the city of Avignon before it fell into the hands of the enemy; an enterprise in which he succeeded.

Meanwhile the position of Bourbon was onerous in the extreme. The citizens rose as one man to oppose him; and the burgher-guard alone soon amounted to nine thousand men. Nor was it solely against male valour that he was called upon to contend; all ranks of women throughout the city vying with each other in their efforts to second the noble exertions of their fathers and brothers, and succeeding so efficiently in defending one of the trenches, whence the troops had been withdrawn to meet an attack upon another point, that it has ever since been known as "The Ladies' Trench." Those who were too weak to hurl missiles, or to supply ammunition to the combatants, bore away the wounded and administered to their wants; while so resolute were the inhabitants never to surrender their city, that the siege lasted forty days, and the sacrifice of life on both sides was immense.

An evil star appeared to plane over Bourbon. The supplies of which he had wrung a promise from England did not arrive; and the Italian troops, satisfied by the

expulsion of the French from their territories, refused to co-operate across the frontier, loudly insisting that a representation should be made to the emperor, to secure the mediation of the pope, by which peace might be restored throughout Europe. The imperial flotilla was, moreover, encountered by the gallies of Andrea Doria, and the French vessels under La Fayette the vice-admiral; several of the ships were destroyed, and others taken, together with all on board, among whom was Philibert de Chalon, Prince of Orange; and meanwhile Bourbon was as ill seconded within the camp as without.

At the commencement of the siege he had treated the matter lightly; for, deceived by the facility with which he had rendered himself master of the other towns of Provence, he did not calculate upon any protracted resistance on the part of the Marseillaise, and was unguarded enough to declare that half-a-dozen discharges of artillery would bring the terrified citizens to the feet of the confederated generals with the keys of the fortress in their hands, and ropes about their necks; and so great was the influence which he possessed over the troops, that they would have placed implicit confidence in the assurance, had not Pescara, who had already writhed beneath a conviction of the duke's paramount importance in his own country, led him to imbue the soldiery with feelings of suspicion and distrust towards his person which soon induced fatal results. The arrival of Lannoy was also painfully delayed; and although the invading army had reached Provence at the beginning of July, it was not until the 7th of September that the besiegers were enabled to mount their battery with the heavy ordnance

which they had brought for the purpose from Toulon and Bregançon, while their musketry produced no impression whatever upon the walls of the city; and this was the more mortifying to the confederated generals from the fact that the artillery of the enemy was in excellent condition and admirably served, producing an amount of damage in their camp for which they had been totally unprepared.

The Italian patriots under Lorenzo de Céri, also succeeded by their constant sallies in impeding the mining and other labours of the imperialists; while so constant and well-directed a fire was sustained against them, that on one occasion during the performance of mass in the tent of the Marquis de Pescara, the officiating priest and two of the attendants were killed by a cannon-ball. Attracted by the confusion consequent on the event, Bourbon hastened to the scene of action, anxiously inquiring what had occurred; when the Spanish General, who had remained calm and self-possessed during the uproar, sarcastically requested him to dismiss all uneasiness, as it was only the timid burghers of Marseilles, who, according to his pledge, were on their way with the city keys, and their necks in the noose, to deliver themselves and their fortress into his hands.

A day or two subsequently a breach was effected by means of the heavy ordnance, and an attempt was made to take the city by storm; but Lorenzo de Céri so effectually protected the opening by means of a strong rampart and a deep ditch, that it was found impracticable; and Pescara no sooner ascertained the fact than he proceeded to the tent of Bourbon, in which a council of war was then sitting, and, without affecting to remark

the duke himself, exclaimed vehemently; "Gentlemen, you who will it may go to heaven; there are means at hand, if you only remain, and persevere in this siege; but as I can wait, I shall return to Italy, before I lose alike my life and my renown."

As he ceased speaking he left the tent, and was followed by every individual of the council save Bourbon himself, who had no alternative save to issue orders for a retreat, which he now saw would be effected equally without his sanction. At that moment he became bitterly aware that he had lost at once substance and shadow. The independent kingdom, and the royal wife, both of which his sword and his name were to have secured to him, had alike eluded his grasp; he was no longer the powerful master of a dozen provinces upon whom victory had waited; he was an outlawed, exiled, worsted general; an alien alike in his own land and in that which he had adopted.

On the 28th of September the retreat accordingly commenced, deliberately and in good order; but it was not effected without molestation, the Maréchal de Chabannes, at the head of six hundred horse, falling upon the rear of the column, and not only destroying a great number of the enemy, but also securing an enormous quantity of booty; while Montmorenci with a strong force pursued them as far as Toulon, and did considerable damage, although he did not succeed in arresting their march.

On the 28th of June, Francis had written from Amboise to assure the citizens of Provence that he would immediately march in person to their assistance; and for

this purpose he had collected an army consisting of fourteen hundred Swiss, six thousand lansquenets, ten thousand French and Italian infantry, and fifteen hundred horse. The retreat of the confederated generals, however, rendered this reinforcement unnecessary; and dazzled by such unhoped-for success, Francis, who once more saw himself master of a considerable army, resolved to make a new attempt to regain the Milanese.

The most experienced of his generals attempted to dissuade him from so quixotic a project, representing that the autumn was now nearly at an end, and that his army must be inevitably weakened and exhausted by the mere casualties of so formidable a march, even before they met the enemy; but to this objection he replied by haughtily remarking, that such as were afraid of the cold might remain in Provence. He had been assured by Bonnivet that his presence alone was required to ensure the subjugation of the duchy, and his vanity was flattered by the prospect of succeeding where older and more tried soldiers had failed. Equally in vain were the expostulations of Louise de Savoie, who having been informed of his altered intentions, despatched a courier to entreat him to await her arrival, as she had secrets of great importance to communicate; while at the same time she informed him of the death of the queen, whose long-failing health had at length given way under her perpetual mortifications.

Neither consideration, however, could change or retard his resolution; and contenting himself by simply expressing his regret at the demise of his wife, and confirming the authority of his mother as regent of France

during his absence, the king immediately hastened to cross the Alps, and to pursue his march to Milan.

But if Francis in his selfish enthusiasm failed to mourn over the fate of his victim, his subjects at least avenged her. Gentle and unobtrusive as her life had been, the Good Queen Claude, as the burghers and people were accustomed to designate her, had left a thousand memories of long-enduring sweetness and inexhaustible charity as a monument in their hearts. Her whole existence had been one of suffering. Reared in strict seclusion, she had given her first and only affection to her young husband; nor had neglect, harshness, or inconstancy tended to weaken it. Aware of his excesses, she pardoned, without seeking to avenge them; and when some passing remorse brought him for a time to her side, she forgot the tears which he had cost her and welcomed him with a smile. But the daughter of Louis XII. was less strong in body than in mind; and her perpetual sufferings terminated her life on the 26th of October, at the palace of Blois, at the early age of twenty-five. She was interred as modestly as she had lived; the king was absent; and no pompous ceremonial desecrated the remains of her gentle spirit.

In one thing, at least, Francis was sincere, for he did not even affect a semblance of grief at her death. She had left him three sons, and the succession was assured; he was about to effect the conquest of the Milanese, and he had no leisure for domestic regrets; a loving heart was cold, but his own was capacious, and he was now free. So little, indeed, was he touched by her loss, that only a few weeks subsequently, when during his progress

through Provence, the citizens of Manosque caused the keys of their city to be presented to him by the most beautiful girl of the place, the looks and gestures of the king so terrified the young and timid Mademoiselle de Voland, that discovering no other method of escaping from insult, she applied sulphuric acid to her face on her return home, and thus heroically, and effectually, put an end to the licentious advances of her royal admirer.

Having failed in dissuading her son from his new enterprise, Louise de Savoie, now regent of France, began to feel that she was in a position to revenge upon the minister of finance the affront to which she had been subjected through his uncompromising probity; and she accordingly hastened to suggest to Francis the expediency of borrowing a large sum from de Semblançay, to enable him to support the expenses of his Italian expedition without harassing his subjects. The king, who eagerly welcomed any measure by which he could be relieved from his momentary difficulties, did not hesitate to avail himself of the hint; but the old minister, who had already advanced three hundred thousand crowns from his own private fortune to uphold the dignity of the sovereign, and who saw no prospect of their ever being repaid, respectfully but firmly declined to make any further advance.

"I have claims upon me, madame;" he said, when the regent laid before him the letter of the king; "which compel me to withhold any further loan to the crown."

"You refuse then, Sir?"

"I have no alternative, madame, I am now an old man, and cannot look forward to redeem my losses; nor

must your highness deem it an act of disrespect or disloyalty, if, while reluctantly obliged to disappoint the expectations of my sovereign, I also crave the repayment of my previous loan."

"Sir;" said the duchess, as she rose haughtily from her chair, and fixed her large eyes coldly and sternly upon his; "Do you wish to destroy yourself?"

"I am at a loss to understand you, madame."

"I shall ere long make my meaning clearer. I will not detain you longer. Go, and reflect."

With a low obeisance which was, nevertheless, as haughty as her own, the venerable minister retired; and for a few days Louise de Savoie waited to ascertain the result of her threat; but as M. de Semblançay evinced no disposition to relent, she despatched a messenger to the army, who returned with an order for the dismissal of the finance-minister, signed by the king himself; when she arrogantly informed him that he was at liberty to retire at once from the court; a permission of which he immediately and gladly availed himself, and withdrew to an estate which he possessed near Tours.

The capture of Milan was soon effected, M. de Lannoy by whom it was held, being unable to make an effective resistance against so strong a force as that by which he was now assailed. But Milan was no longer what it had formerly been; impoverished, not only by the pillage of its enemies, but also by the exactions of those who had professed to be its friends; its battered houses filling its deserted streets with unsightly ruins; and its diminished population still trembling at the recollection of the fearful plague to which hundreds of

their fellow-townsmen had fallen victims; nothing could be more uninviting to the eyes of a conqueror than the aspect of the once proud city which had so long been the centre of conflicting ambitions.

Had the French king pursued the retreating army, it is probable that he would have driven them out of Italy; as the people, wearied and outraged by the iron rule of Spain and Germany, were anxious for their expulsion; while his unexpected success had so alarmed the new pope, Clement VII, that he entered into a treaty by which he bound himself to furnish him with supplies for carrying on the war; while the monarch, on his side, pledged himself to protect the interests of the Ecclesiastical States, and the members of the Medici family. But, intoxicated by the brilliant commencement of his campaign, and surrounded by a bevy of hot-headed favourites, who by flattering his weakness ensured their own interests, Francis, who was personally brave, and who panted to distinguish himself in the eyes of the emperor, yielded to that passion for knight-errantry which had been his bane as a general from his very youth, and disdaining to turn aside from his one great purpose, suffered the confederalists to condense their forces, and to mature their plans; while by the insidious advice of his chosen friends he pursued his march to Pavia, taking possession as he went of every fortress upon the way.

At the passage of the Ticino he experienced considerable resistance from the garrison of a fort, which, however, ultimately fell into his hands; and he was so exasperated by the delay which their pertinacity had

induced, that they no sooner surrendered than he caused every individual to be hanged who still survived within the walls; declaring that "they had richly earned their fate by daring to attempt the defence of such a hen-roost against the army of the King of France."

The park of Mirabello affording an admirable position, the French army encamped there for the purpose of investing Pavia, which was defended by da Leyva,[1] who had exerted all his energies to strengthen the fortifications, and who was so ably and zealously seconded by

[1] Antonio da Leyva, who was reported to have been the son of a shoemaker, made his first campaign under the standard of Emanuel de Benavides, when he invaded Messina with an army of two thousand four hundred Spaniards, where he drew upon himself the attention of that general by his extraordinary valour and intrepidity. His rise was consequently rapid, until the period of the battle of Ravenna, where he, in common with those about him, fled from the field. He subsequently, however, redeemed his honour by his gallant defence of Pavia, and his successful opposition to the several generals who were sent against him, among whom were the Maréchal de Lautrec and the Count de Saint-Pol; although, during the latter portion of his military career, he had become so great a victim to the gout, and other constitutional maladies, that he was compelled to be carried on a litter at the head of his troops.

After the victory of Pavia, he adopted as his device a hive, about which the bees were swarming, with the motto, *Sic vos non vobis.* The taking of Fossan was his last and crowning exploit; but the defeat and capture of Francis I. at Pavia had already secured to him the favour and friendship of the emperor, through whose influence and indulgence he was enabled to realize a gigantic fortune, which he bequeathed to his children, having previously married his daughters to some of the wealthiest grandees of Spain. The tomb of this brave and fortunate soldier, who had entered the army obscure and unknown, was inscribed with the pompous titles of Prince of Ascoly, Duke de Terranova, Marquis d'Attello, and primate of the Canary Islands.

the inhabitants that he was enabled effectually to carry out his object. So great, indeed, was the enthusiasm of the citizens that, as at Marseilles, even the women worked in the trenches; and ere long it became evident that the city could not be taken by assault.

The attempt made by the French troops to effect this object proved indeed most disastrous; for, misled by the fact that the outer walls were not guarded by a ditch, and that their artillery was consequently enabled to approach so near as to open a wide breach, they began to anticipate an easy conquest; they soon, however, discovered that the ditch which was wanting without the walls had been formed within, while every private house had been converted into a fortress, and filled with troops. Foiled in this attempt, the French engineers endeavoured to turn one of the courses of the Ticino, which bathes the walls of Pavia, and to compel it into another channel, but the rainy season having set in, they found it impossible to effect their purpose. There remained, consequently, no alternative save that of sitting down before the city, occupying the several thoroughfares which led to its gates, and by thus cutting off all supplies, to await the result of famine.

The pope, alarmed by hostilities which threatened to destroy the peace of Italy for an interminable period, and seeing the whole country rapidly becoming the prey of two hostile sovereigns who were alike strangers, but each of whom was endeavouring to undermine its liberty and independence, declared that he would not espouse the interest of either party, but as the head of Catholic Europe, was ready at any moment to mediate between

them. He accordingly despatched to Francis his apostolical datary, Juan Matteo Ghiberti, proposing a general truce for five years, while a second messenger was accredited to De Lannoy with the same suggestion. It was, however, coldly rejected on both sides, with the assurance of the French king in reply, that ere long he should be master of Pavia, and sovereign of the Milanese; while Lannoy, acting for the Emperor, bade the papal envoy inform His Holiness, that he would never affix his name to any treaty or truce which could tend to leave one foot of ground in the contested duchy under the dominion of Francis.

His interference having proved unavailing upon this point, the pontiff next demanded to maintain his own neutrality, and that of the other Italian states; but, although this was listlessly conceded by both parties, the privilege became merely nominal, from the fact that Clement VII. was at once too undecided and too avaricious to take the necessary steps to uphold the dignity of his high station. Fearful of favouring the party which might ultimately fail, he waited to observe the progress of events; and too fond of money to maintain an army such as might have enabled him rather to dictate terms to the two invading princes than to ask impunity for his own supineness, he remained powerless and unprotected, an easy prey to the victor.

The assured attitude assumed by Francis induced him, however, to enter into a secret treaty with that sovereign, by which he pledged himself that neither he himself individually, the city of Florence, nor the Venetian senate, should furnish the emperor with any supplies, either of

men or money; while the French king agreed, in consideration of this promise, to take the Florentine republic under his immediate protection; but although this treaty was probably made in all sincerity on both sides, it availed little to Francis, as the Venetians allowed the Duke de Bourbon to traverse their territories unmolested in the month of January following at the head of a large force.

Meanwhile Francis appeared to have greatly the advantage over his enemies, surrounded as he was by a numerous and well-organized army, all eager to encounter the imperialists, and to win renown under the eyes of their sovereign. His treasury was, moreover, well supplied, and provisions were poured into his camp from every side. New levies had been raised in Switzerland, and constant reinforcements increased the bulk of his already gigantic force. The imperial generals were, on the contrary, at the head of a body of men exhausted by the previous campaign, disheartened by this new and formidable opposition, weakened by an epidemic which had broken out among the troops, and utterly without pecuniary resources. The weather was, however, greatly in their favour; as although the French continued to keep up a heavy fire upon the walls, and endeavoured to undermine them, the quantity of rain which fell impeded all their measures.

Nevertheless, Francis calculated so firmly upon the effects of famine and privation within the city, where he had been already informed by his spies that symptoms of mutiny had appeared among the garrison, that he resolved to detach a portion of his army, which was rapidly becoming weary of inaction, to the assistance of

the Angevin party, who had declared their desire to take up arms against the Spaniards on the Neapolitan territories. Every circumstance tended to render the moment a propitious one for such an enterprise; Lannoy, in order to strengthen his army in the Milanese, had left Naples almost defenceless; the secret treaty entered into with the pope, relieved Francis from all apprehension of his hostility; Pescara had absolutely refused to hazard an engagement with the French, by which alone the design against Naples might have been frustrated; and the imperialist soldiers were sullenly murmuring, not only at the daily privations which they were compelled to undergo, but also at the long arrears of pay which disabled them from procuring any alleviation of their sufferings. From the emperor there was, moreover, little to fear at that particular juncture, as he was confined to a sick-bed in Spain, and at the head of an army alike weak and discontented, while perpetual feuds had rendered his generals distrustful of each other. All considerations consequently appeared to favour a revolution in Naples; and Francis accordingly confided the command of a body of nine thousand men to the Duke d'Aubigny, the ex-regent of Scotland, with instructions to act against the Spaniards.

For a time da Leyva was enabled to silence the murmurs of the garrison of Pavia by assurances that ample funds for the payment of their arrears were in the hands of the viceroy Lannoy; to whom he wrote, earnestly representing the impossibility of sustaining the siege unless he received immediate supplies. Lannoy was aware that his position was critical; but the invest-

ment of the city by the French troops rendering it impossible to convey relief to the besieged save by stratagem, he was compelled to have recourse to a bold and hazardous experiment of which he was careful to apprise da Leyva; and a short time subsequently two Spanish troopers in the garb of peasants, mounted upon sturdy and ill-groomed hackneys, and each leading a second horse charged with a couple of wine-barrels, presented themselves before the French camp, and asked permission to enter in order to vend their merchandise. They were gladly welcomed, that necessary luxury to Frenchmen having become rare; and they accordingly rode forward until they were close under the city walls, where they unloaded their animals, and affected to be preparing to stave in the tubs. This was the moment for which the Spanish general had been anxiously watching, and the precious barrels laden with treasure were no sooner lifted to the ground, than he made a sudden and desperate sally, and succeeded in possessing himself of the prize.

Ere long, however, the clamours of the troops were renewed; their claims were still unpaid in part, while their numerous necessities had been far from satisfied; and in this new emergency—which was rendered doubly dangerous from the fact that even the lansquenets, who had hitherto remained passive, began to exhibit symptoms of mutiny in their turn—da Leyva found himself compelled to resort to the same expedient as the Emperor Dionysius, who tore the golden robe from the shoulders of Apollo; and to strip all the shrines of Padua of their precious metals. Like a good Catholic, however, he accompanied this act of sacrilege by a solemn vow to restore to each

of the despoiled altars gifts of still greater value, if he should succeed in defending the city; and with the spoil thus secured he caused a coarse coinage to be struck with which he paid his army, and escaped from the threatened peril.

The priests, at the termination of the siege, ventured humbly to remind him of the sacred pledge that he had given; but da Leyva politely referred them to the emperor, of whom he told them that he was but the subject and servant, and to whom, as he asserted, they must consequently look for the remuneration which they sought. Charles V, however, whose days of saintship had not yet commenced, and who found it expedient to sink the sovereign in the soldier, declined, when they transmitted their application, to render himself answerable for debts contracted without his sanction; and thus the goodly ornaments of the temples of Pavia were lost to them for ever.

Meanwhile Bourbon had, as we have stated, joined the imperial camp with his new levies; and supported by so powerful a command he was enabled to act independently of Pescara and Lannoy, whose jealousy and distrust had hitherto paralysed all his efforts. Unfortunately for the French cause, the arrival of the duke occurred almost simultaneously with the departure of D'Aubigny for Naples; while the fatal effects of the inclement weather to which they were exposed, were moreover becoming painfully apparent in the relaxed discipline and rapidly thinning ranks of the royal army. Desertions constantly occurred, which were carefully concealed from the king, as well as the mortality that

was taking place among the troops; and he continued to make the necessary disbursements for an efficient army, when many of the regiments were reduced to half their original numbers. The rapacity of the officers to whom these large sums were entrusted became only more inordinate as they found the impunity with which their measures were attended; upon which Bourbon, when apprised by his emissaries of the fatal error of the king, who soon began to experience considerable inconvenience in meeting so enormous and perpetual an outlay, resolved to take advantage of the circumstance, and suggested an immediate attack upon the enemy. Neither Lannoy nor Pescara, however, were prepared to follow his suggestion; while the troops openly declared that until they received the full payment of their arrears they would not take the field. As further delay would but deepen this difficulty, it was consequently resolved that the three generals should distribute among their several followers whatever private property they possessed, and at once march upon the French camp; and ultimately, on the 25th January, 1525, the imperialists struck their tents, and left Lodi, on their route towards Pavia.

Once again, the partiality of Francis for the Swiss mercenaries was fated to be cruelly shaken; six thousand Grisons who had voluntarily joined his army being at this period induced to desert his cause by Gian Giacomo de' Medici, who having surprised and taken the castle of Chiavenna, an important fortress on the Lake of Como, so alarmed the inhabitants of the country that they issued orders for the instant return of all their troops then in the pay of France, nor could all the persuasions of the king succeed

in detaining them; a mortification rendered still greater by the fact that they withdrew only five days previous to the battle; while sundry other serious casualties had occurred by which his strength was shaken and his movements crippled. Four thousand Italian troops, raised in Savona by the Marquis de Saluzzo for the service of France, were surprised while crossing the Alessandrino, and were nearly cut to pieces; Palavicino with a still stronger reinforcement, was compelled to give battle to the enemy at Casal-Maggiore, where his troops were defeated, and himself taken prisoner; Juan de' Medici, who commanded the Black Bands, was wounded in the thigh on the 20th of February, and compelled to withdraw from the camp; and, finally, the pope, still anxious if possible to put an end to hostilities, once more endeavoured to mediate between the conflicting parties, and urged the expediency of restoring the Genoese to liberty; while Spain, after so long a delay, forwarded the sum of a hundred and fifty thousand ducats for the support of her troops, at a period when Francis was beginning to discover the inadequacy of his own resources.

The defection of the Grisons raised the hopes of da Leyva; who, aware that the imperialist generals were preparing to relieve him, abandoned the purely defensive system which he had hitherto pursued, and by constant and vigorous sallies harassed the French troops, and deprived them of all repose. Their position was, moreover, by no means secure, encamped as they were between a strongly fortified and well-garrisoned city, and an advancing army which greatly exceeded them in numbers. On the 1st of February the imperialists had

advanced within a mile of the French outposts, where they endeavoured until near the end of the month, by perpetual skirmishes, to induce Francis to pass his entrenchments and to give them battle. At length, wearied of inaction, Pescara determined to effect his entrance into the park of Mirabello, for the purpose of relieving the garrison of Pavia; or failing in that attempt, forcing the enemy from within their lines to the open ground. The French were, however, prepared for this movement; and the Spanish general accordingly found them drawn up in order of battle, and covered by a formidable force of artillery under the command of Jacques Gaillot de Genouilhac, Sénéchal d'Armagnac.

The vanguard of the imperialists suffered severely as they began to traverse the level plain, but they still persisted in their advance; while the main body under the command of Pescara, and the rearguard under that of Lannoy and Bourbon, were each in their turn exposed to the same galling fire, until they were enabled to take refuge in a small valley which afforded them partial shelter. Alphonso d'Avalos, Marquis del Guasto[1] who

[1] The Marquis del Guasto was the cousin of Pescara, under whom he served, until the death of the latter, with considerable distinction; and subsequently became so great a favourite of Charles V, that during his expedition against Tunis, that sovereign appointed him lieutenant-general of his forces, and himself yielded the same obedience to his orders which he exacted from others. He was afterwards lieutenant-general in Italy and the Milanese. He raised the siege of Nice, where he was opposed by M. d'Anguyen and Barbarossa; but lost much of his reputation by his defeat at Cerizola, where he fled from the field before the termination of the battle. Vain as he was brave, M. del Guasto was remarkable for the costliness of his dress and jewels, and for his inordinate love of perfumes, which he used

commanded the vanguard, then instructed his men to scatter themselves, and to make their way as rapidly as they could individually to the walls of the city, in order that they might not present so sure a mark for the enemy's guns, a manœuvre which completely misled Francis; who, surrounded by a brilliant staff, was watching the movements of his adversaries, and no sooner witnessed this apparent confusion than he gave an order to charge, which was eagerly re-echoed by the hot-headed young nobles about him.

The words had scarcely died away upon his lips when the whole body of his cavalry galloped to the front, thus suspending the operations of the artillery; while the troops of del Guasto, profiting by so unexpected a pause, once more formed into line with their face towards the French camp. The imperialist horse, among whom were a body of Spanish harquebussiers, answered the charge of the royal lances with a steady and well-directed fire; and many a noble cavalier bit the dust before the course of the maddened horses could be arrested.

On learning the approach of the confederated army, Francis had lost no time in recalling La Tremouille and Lescun from Milan; but even at that period he remained so prepossessed by the idea that he must inevitably prove successful, that he did not attempt to interfere with any of the measures adopted by Bonnivet; even allowing him on many occasions to preside over the war-councils, and

not only upon his own person, but upon the very saddle on which he rode. After his disgraceful flight from Cerizola, he redeemed himself by new and valiant exploits, and died only a short time before the French king, whose courtesy he had repaid by treachery and ingratitude.

supporting his views in opposition to those of his veteran generals, while he amused himself in his society and in that of Anne de Montmorenci, Brion, and other enthusiasts, who succeeded in persuading him that his very presence must ensure victory, by arranging gigantic and gorgeous plans consequent upon his conquest, and never destined to be realized.

Somewhat startled, however, by the actual advance of the enemy, Francis assembled about him all his oldest and bravest officers, among whom were La Palice, La Tremouille, Réné de Savoie, the Duke of Suffolk, Galéaz de Saint Sévérino, and Lescun, who severally urged upon him the expediency of raising his camp, and taking up a position which might prevent the imperialists from reaching Pavia; representing that the garrison must inevitably disband itself from want of money and provisions, if, by persisting in his refusal to come to a general engagement, he abandoned it to its own resources. The younger nobles, however, listened scornfully to these suggestions, and were in vain reminded by their more experienced coadjutors that by so prudent a line of policy, not only Pavia itself, but the whole of the duchy must ultimately fall into the hands of the king; declaring the suggestion to be unworthy the consideration of the conqueror of Marignano. La Tremouille then suggested that should Francis indeed decide upon coming to a general engagement, he would act wisely in quitting his camp, and meeting the imperialists in the open plain; a proposition to which it is probable that the king would readily have acceded, had not Bonnivet, whose rash arrogance could tolerate no opposition, eagerly and vehemently exclaimed—

"Are you aware, gentlemen, of the extent of the ignominy which you propose to our brave king whose valour and courage are well known, when you suggest to him to raise the siege, and to avoid the battle which is now offered to us, and which we have so long desired? We Frenchmen have never yet refused to meet an enemy, and have not been accustomed to fight according to the rules of petty subterfuges and military artifices, but gallantly and openly; and still less should we close now, when we have at our head a bold and valiant sovereign who should give courage to cowards. Kings habitually carry good fortune with them, and not only good fortune, but assured success; witness our young king Charles VIII. at Taro, Louis XII. at Aignadel, and still more recently our present gracious monarch at Marignano; so efficient is their very presence upon the field. And doubt not, but that on seeing him at the head of his army, (for the king, gentlemen, will himself be our leader,) all the brave troops by whom he is surrounded will follow his example, and cut down the puny enemy against whom we are called upon to contend. Thus, Sire, let us give battle to the forces of Charles; and that speedily."

This insidious advice was followed; and as we have shown, the two hostile armies met; but the imprudent movement of Francis had already seriously affected his interests. The cessation of the firing enabled the imperialists to rally; and the Marquis del Guasto had already reached the castle, and detached a strong party to the gate of the city, which they were about to enter, when they were driven back by Brion. Other divisions

of the imperial army followed on the same track, but they were successively routed by the renewed fire of the French guns, which were turned upon the point where they hoped to have effected their entrance. Francis, however, having detached the flanks of his Swiss and lansquenets whom he had ordered to advance, had so exposed his main body that Pescara instantly profited by the error, and threw a body of eight hundred Spanish riflemen upon the enemy's cavalry, while del Guasto attacked the right wing under Montmorenci. The Swiss, unprepared for the charge, faltered and gave way, and on seeing their leader fall, fled from the field, abandoning Montmorenci and Fleuranges, who were made prisoners by the enemy. The French troops, nevertheless, stood their ground bravely, and the want of prudence in their leaders was nobly compensated by their steady and resolute valour. But the first error could not be retrieved. Bourbon with his body of Germans, and Pescara at the head of his Spaniards, marched resolutely against the enemy, and were followed by Lannoy on the other flank of the French army; while Antonio de Leyva made an impetuous sally with his cavalry, which greatly assisted their charge.

The Maréchal de la Palice, aware of the advantage obtained by the imperialists, hastened to bring the vanguard into action ere it should be too late; and the Duke d'Alençon, although with less alacrity, also moved forward on the opposite wing; while Francis, who had taken up his position in front of the main body, was surrounded by his gendarmes. No exertion, however, could redeem the fortunes of the day. The king saw himself assailed in three opposite directions, and his bravest officers falling

about him on all sides. The gallant and unfortunate De la Pole, or as he was commonly called by the French, Rose Blanche, fell at the head of the Black Bands, and thus terminated a career of persecution by an honourable death. The force which he commanded being under the ban of the empire for persisting in their fidelity to the French cause, and detested by the Swiss who regarded them as dangerous rivals, were, moreover, particularly obnoxious to their own countrymen by whom they were looked upon as rebels; and thus, aware that they could expect no quarter in the event of defeat, they had fought with such desperate resolution that they had not yielded a foot of ground, and had fallen where they stood; maintaining their position even in death with such resolute pertinacity as to extract the exclamation from Francis, at the termination of the battle, that had all his subjects that day done their duty like the brave men who lay at his feet, Pavia would have changed masters, and the Spanish generals been in bonds instead of himself.

On every side, however, the slaughter was fearful; and much of the best blood of France flowed on that fatal field. The fate of the veteran La Palice was melancholy. He had twice succeeded in beating back the imperialists, when a new reinforcement convinced him that he could no longer cope with so unequal an enemy. His lieutenant Clermont d'Amboise, to whom he was affectionately attached, was killed under his eyes; but still strong in his indomitable courage, he made a last effort to rally his exhausted forces, when a ball from an harquebuss struck his horse, which fell dead under him. He, however, succeeded in disengaging himself from the saddle,

and had already commenced his retreat towards the infantry when he was taken prisoner. His age and his known valour had inspired his captor with respect, and no indignity was offered to him, until he was encountered by a Spanish captain, who, struck by the splendour of his armour and the dignity of his deportment, immediately perceived that he was no common prize, and declared his determination of sharing in so rich a spoil. To this his original companion demurred, and the quarrel became ere long so violent that the intruder, carried away by the violence of his passion, discharged his weapon at the defenceless prisoner, and stretched him at his feet, with an asseveration that if he were not to profit by his capture, no other individual should do so.

And thus the veteran hero, whose military career commenced at Fornova in 1495, and terminated at Pavia in 1525, with scarcely a stain to mar its lustre, fell in cold blood, the victim of a narrow-hearted and sordid wretch, to whom gold was of more value than the life of a fellow-creature.

Had Francis possessed as much military knowledge and sound judgment as he evinced courage and energy on this fateful occasion, the day of Pavia must have been a glorious one for France; but here, as on every other occasion, he had been deluded by his vanity and betrayed by his want of prudence. Encouraged by the flatterers who surrounded him, to believe himself invulnerable to human reverses, he had sacrificed his army in a weak attempt at self-aggrandizement, and by masking his artillery in order to make a personal assault upon the gates of Pavia, turned the whole tide of the

battle. Nor did his imprudence end there; for, by the splendour of his dress, he had rendered himself so conspicuous that his escape in the event of failure became impossible. Already sufficiently distinguished by his tall and commanding person, he wore over his armour a surcoat of cloth of silver, while his helmet was surmounted by a white plume which served as a beacon to the enemy. His exploits on the field, however, did no dishonour to the royalty of his appearance, for the humblest and most obscure man-at-arms under his command could not have fought more valiantly than himself; and for a time Bonnivet equalled him in courage and resolution; but the moment came at length in which the arrogant favourite felt that all was lost. After having in vain endeavoured to rally the remnant of the Swiss troops and a few gendarmes, he raised the visor of his helmet, and exclaiming; "No; I cannot survive this disgraceful defeat—I must die in the thickest of the fight;" he set spurs to his horse, and in a few moments fell pierced by twenty wounds.

Still the king maintained his ground, and at one time with a slight prospect of success; but the Spanish infantry under Pescara, and a body of fifteen hundred Basque crossbow-men whom they protected, receiving them into their ranks after each separate discharge, soon decided the fate of the field. The operations of these skirmishers were so rapid and so erratic that it was impossible either to foresee or to retort their attacks, while by their extraordinary celerity and quickness of sight they were enabled to approach and pick off the most conspicuous of the enemy. Thus they succeeded in destroying among others

the gallant La Tremouille, who fell pierced at once through his head and his heart, and the count Galéaz de Saint Sévérino, the great-equerry of France, whose duty it was to protect the person of the king; a duty which he had so courageously and devotedly performed that he was riddled with wounds, and when his horse was at length shot under him, was almost smothered in his own blood. As a friend who saw him fall hastened to his assistance, and would have conveyed him from the field, true to his oath, he still summoned strength to gasp out; "Leave me; I am beyond your care. Look to the king, and leave me to die."

It was this critical moment, when nothing save a charge from the infantry upon the Basques could avert the total ruin of the French army, and when the instant arrival of the Duke d'Alençon was confidently anticipated, that the weak and terrified prince selected to command a retreat. He had hitherto taken no part in the engagement, save the solitary demonstration to which we have already alluded; but he nevertheless shrank before the danger which presented itself, and resolved to effect his escape. A strong body of Swiss troops, who had relied on his support, on remarking the retrograde movement of his division, were struck with panic and retired in disorder, believing that their destruction, should they continue to advance, was inevitable; and thus the remnant of the French army was alone left to rally round their king. In quick succession Longman d'Augsbourg the captain of the lansquenets, François de Lambesc, the brother of the Duke de Lorraine, Wittemberg de Lauffen, Theodoric de Schomberg, and all the

principal leaders of the lansquenets, had fallen upon one fatal spot; and now another bevy of brave men were collected with scarcely a hope of brighter fortune. And great indeed was the second sacrifice. La Palice and La Tremouille had already fallen, as well as Saint Sévérino and d'Aubigny; but Lescun, the Count de Tonnerre, and many others of the first nobility of France, were killed at the side of Francis. The white plume of the sovereign was the rallying point for all the chivalry of the nation; and even Bussy d'Amboise, who had been instructed to impede the egress of the garrison of Pavia, no sooner discovered the peril of his king than he abandoned his post and hastened to his assistance. Unfortunately, however, he had scarcely reached the royal standard ere he was killed in his turn, while the Spaniards under da Leyva finding themselves by these means enabled to leave the city, rushed tumultuously through the gates, and in the first impulse of vengeance for past constraint massacred the prisoners taken by their comrades.

Yet still the group around the French king defended themselves with unabated energy; the Basques began in their turn to fall before the enemy whom they had so long and so successfully assailed; and Pescara, who was at their head, was severely wounded in the face, unhorsed, and narrowly escaped capture. Had the gendarmes of Francis been efficiently supported at this juncture much might still have been achieved; but compelled to act alone against a mixed and superior force, they were reduced to the alternative of retiring closer and closer about the person of the king; while the advance of Bourbon with his lansquenets, and the

impetuous charge to which they were subjected on his approach, created a disorder in their ranks which they were utterly unable to retrieve.

The battle had scarcely lasted throughout an hour, and already it was decided. A few feet of that field which he had confidently hoped would ensure to him the undying glory of a conqueror, were all that remained to Francis; but even for these few feet he still contended gallantly. With his own hand he had cut down the Marquis de St. Angelo, the last descendant of Scanderbeg, and unhorsed the Chevalier d'Andelot, besides dealing vigorous blows upon others of less note during the earlier period of the battle; and now, when he fought rather against hope than from any anticipation of success, his aim continued as true and his hand as steady as though an empire still hung on the result of his prowess.

He was already bleeding profusely from three wounds, one of which had traversed his forehead, and caused him acute pain, when his horse was shot under him, and he fell to the ground beside six of his assailants, all of whom had been struck down by his own sword on the same spot. Enfeebled as he was, he succeeded in disengaging himself from his dead charger; and once more leaping into the saddle of a led horse, which had been prepared in the event of such an emergency, he turned one long and regretful glance upon the chivalrous little group who had so lately formed his best bulwark, but who were now scattered over the plain in a desperate attempt to evade the troops of Bourbon; and striking his spurs into the flanks of the animal, he galloped off in the direction of the bridge across the Ticino, ignorant

that former fugitives had destroyed it after they had effected their own passage. At the moment in which he made this unfortunate discovery, he was encountered by four Spanish riflemen, who at once sprang to his bridle, and prevented all further attempts at escape. Providentially, they had expended their ammunition; but one of the number, fearful that a prisoner whose high rank was apparent from the richness of his costume, should elude their grasp, struck the panting horse of the king over the head with the stock of his rifle, and thus precipitated both the animal and his rider into a ditch by the way-side.

This cowardly act was scarcely accomplished, when two Spanish light-horsemen, Diégo d'Abila and Juan d'Urbiéta, arrived upon the spot; and being struck by the extreme richness of the king's apparel, and the order of St. Michael with which he was decorated, they at once agreed that the captive was no common prize, and insisted upon their proportion of the ransom-money. The situation of Francis was perilous in the extreme, for we have already stated that the gallant and veteran Maréchal de la Palice had been wantonly murdered under precisely the same circumstances; but, as

"There's a divinity doth hedge a king,"

so did that special Providence preserve the defeated monarch in this fearful crisis of his fate. Horsemen were heard approaching rapidly; the rattling of armour and the clang of weapons announced a numerous party; and in the next instant, M. de Pompérant, the friend and confidant of Bourbon, and M. de la Motte des

Moyers, a gentleman of his household, at the head of a troop of men-at-arms, checked their horses beside the group. One glance sufficed to assure them both that the wounded and exhausted man, from whose brow the blood was still streaming over his glittering surcoat, was the French monarch; and putting aside the wrangling soldiers, M. de Pompérant sprang from his horse, and threw himself at the feet of the king, beseeching him not further to endanger his existence by a resistance which was alike hopeless and desperate.

Faint and subdued alike by fatigue, suffering, and bitter feeling, Francis leant for an instant upon his sword as if in deliberation. "Rise, Sir;" he said at length; "It is mockery to kneel to a captive king. I am ready to share the fate of the brave men who have fallen with me. To whom can I resign my sword?"

"The Duke de Bourbon is on the field, Sire;" murmured Pompérant with averted eyes.

"Not so, Sir;" replied the monarch haughtily, as he once more stood proudly erect. "This sword is that of Francis of France: it cannot be entrusted to a traitor. Rather would I die a thousand deaths than that my honour should be so sullied."

"The Viceroy of Naples, Sire—" was the next timid suggestion.

"So let it be;" said the monarch coldly; "he has, at least, not disgraced his own. To M. de Lannoy I may deliver it without shame."

This concession made, La Motte galloped back to the field to announce the surrender of the French king, and to summon the Neapolitan viceroy; not omitting at the

same time to spread the welcome intelligence as he went, and to inquire for the Duke de Bourbon. Thus, only a brief time elapsed ere large bodies of men were on their way to the spot where Francis, still attended by Pompérant, and guarded by the six troopers, remained calmly awaiting their arrival. The first general who reached it was the Marquis del Guasto, who approached the monarch with an air of respectful deference, to which Francis replied with a courtesy as dignified as it was frank; immediately addressing him by name, and expressing a hope that he had escaped unhurt. The immediate care of the marquis was to disperse the crowd of soldiers who were rapidly collecting about the person of the king; after which he resumed his position a little in the rear on his right hand, and, after the hesitation of a moment, Francis, with a faint smile and a steady voice, again spoke.

"I have one favour to claim at your hands, M. del Guasto;" he said. "Fortune has favoured your master, and I must submit; but I would fain pray you not to conduct me to Pavia. I could ill-brook to be made a spectacle to the citizens who have suffered so much at my hands. Allow me to become, for a time at least, your own guest."

"I am at the orders of your Majesty, and deeply sensible of the honour that is conferred upon me;" replied the favourite of Charles. A fresh horse was then led forward, the stirrup was held by Del Guasto bareheaded, and Francis once more mounted, and escorted by the troop of the Spanish general, traversed the camp, in order to reach the quarters of his new host.

Medical aid was instantly procured, his wounds were dressed, and it was discovered that, in addition to the hurts which he had received, his cuirass was indented in several places by balls, one of which had been so well aimed, and had entered so deeply into the metal, that his life had only been preserved by a relic which he wore suspended from a gold chain about his neck, and against which the force of the ball had expended itself.

The operations of the surgeons were scarcely completed ere the Marquis de Pescara entered the tent, who saluted the king coldly, but respectfully; and he was shortly followed by Lannoy, to whom Francis, with the mien rather of a conqueror than a captive, at once tendered his sword. The viceroy bent his knee as he received it, and having deferentially kissed the hand by which it was tendered, immediately presented the king with another weapon. The next general who appeared was Bourbon, still in complete armour with his visor closed, and carrying his reeking sword unsheathed in his hand. As he approached, the king inquired his name, to which Pescara replied that it was Charles of Bourbon; upon which Francis stepped a pace backward, as if to avoid his contact; and Pescara, advancing at the same moment, demanded the duke's sword. Bourbon at once delivered it up; and then raising his visor, cast himself upon his knees before Francis, and humbly craved permission to kiss the royal hand. The indignant monarch coldly and proudly refused to receive this act of homage; and his scorn so deeply wounded the ex-connétable, that he exclaimed bitterly and almost reproachfully; "Ah, Sir, had you but followed my advice, you had never been here and

thus; nor so much of the best blood of France reeking upon the plains of Italy!"

For a moment Francis fixed his eyes sternly upon the prostrate figure before him, and then raising them to heaven, he said impatiently; "Patience—only grant me patience, since fortune has deserted me——"

This trying interview was terminated by Pescara, who intimated to the king that he must within an hour hold himself in readiness to mount, as he should have the honour of escorting him to Pavia before nightfall. The lip of the monarch quivered for a second, and his cheek blenched, but he was too proud to reiterate a request which had been disregarded; and the imperialist generals had no sooner withdrawn than he occupied himself in writing to his mother the celebrated letter which has been so often declared to have consisted only of the brief and emphatic sentence, "Madame, tout est perdu fors l'honneur;" but which Sismondi affirms, on the authority of a MS. chronicle of Nicaise Ladam, king-at-arms of Charles V, and the parliamentary registers of the 10th of November, to have been as wordy and diffuse as his ordinary epistles; and to have merely contained a version of the phrase of which modern historians have represented it entirely to consist.

Lescun, who was mortally wounded, but still survived, exhausted his slender remains of strength in seeking to encounter Bonnivet, to whose evil influence he justly attributed the disasters of his country; and Bourbon, smarting under a new and bitter mortification which he was anxious to avenge upon its original author, was similarly occupied for a considerable time. The search

of Lescun was terminated by utter exhaustion, and he was lifted from his horse covered with blood, and conveyed to Pavia to die. Bourbon was more successful, although his intention was frustrated, for he at length discovered the favourite stretched upon the field stark and stiff, and completely riddled with wounds. The handsomest and vainest noble of France lay a mangled corpse before him; and as, after a lengthened gaze, he turned aside, he murmured less in anger than in pity; "Miserable man! It is to you that both France and myself owe our ruin."

Well might he utter those fearful words; for the battle of Pavia had not only cost the liberty of the French monarch, but had overwhelmed his kingdom with grief and mourning. Among those who fell were the Maréchal de Chabannes, M. de la Trémouille, Bonnivet himself, the Bastard of Savoie, who, although he survived the engagement for a few days, ultimately died of his wounds; Galéaz de Saint Sévérino, the Duke de Lorraine, the Duke of Suffolk, the Count de Tonnerre, the Seigneur de Chaumont, Bussy d'Amboise, and many others of high rank; while the prisoners taken by the imperialists were still more numerous, and of equal reputation. Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre, was the captive of Pescara himself; who, aware of the importance of his prisoner to the emperor, who coveted his kingdom, refused every offer of ransom; a pertinacity which determined the young monarch to attempt his escape, an endeavour in which he was fortunately successful. The Count de St. Pol was equally happy. Having fainted from loss of blood upon the field, he was believed to have expired, but was restored

to consciousness by the agony occasioned by the violence of a soldier, who, in passing, was attracted by the glitter of a valuable jewel that he wore upon his hand, and being unable to withdraw it, proceeded to cut off the finger which it encircled. Startled by the effect of his barbarity, the man at length yielded to the entreaties and promises of the Count, and conveyed him in safety to Pavia, whence, on his restoration to health, he accompanied him to France; but more than a score of the highest nobility of the country remained prisoners to the enemy.

From the moment in which it was ascertained that the king was taken, the French troops offered no further resistance, but many were slaughtered during the succeeding two hours; and numbers of fugitives, dreading a similar fate, attempted to escape by swimming across the Ticino, where they all perished miserably. The disproportion in the aggregate loss of the several armies appears nevertheless incredible; for it is asserted that while that of the French amounted to eight thousand men, the imperialists did not lose more than seven hundred; while they were so anxious to secure their prisoners, and to possess themselves of the enormous booty which had fallen into their hands, that they remained a sufficient time upon the field to secure the flight of the Count de Clermont, and to enable him to destroy the bridges over which he passed on his way through Piedmont; to permit Teodoro Trivulzio to evacuate Milan, and make good his retreat by Lago Maggiore; and to render it practicable for the French to evacuate Lombardy altogether.

The capture of Francis caused a powerful sensation in the imperialist camp. The enthusiasm of the soldiery

knew no bounds; and their admiration of the royal prisoner became at length so demonstrative, that, under the pretence of their presence and acclamations harassing the king, Lannoy forbade them to approach his tent. They had overlooked his defeat at Pavia, and remembered only his victory at Marignano. From the camp Francis was transferred to the citadel of Pizzighittona, and he had scarcely arrived there when Bourbon solicited an interview. Too proud to shrink from the encounter, painful as it was, the king offered no objection; but the duke had no sooner appeared upon the threshold of his apartment than he exclaimed reproachfully; "Are you then so proud of a victory which has ruined those who are nearest and dearest to you, M. de Bourbon?"

"Sire;" replied the ex-connétable respectfully but firmly; "I beseech your Majesty not to reproach me with a defection of which I should never have been guilty, had not the animosity of others compelled me to it."

The king made an impatient gesture, but a shade passed over his brow; and as he was about to seat himself at table, where he had insisted upon the companionship of the Marquis de Pescara, Bourbon approached him deferentially, and tendered to him the finger-napkin as he had formerly done at Amboise. The king looked him earnestly in the face for a moment, and then, slightly bending his head, received it without comment. Monarch as he was, he felt their relative position, and was too proud to contend against his conqueror. With a frankness and courage which did him honour, he discussed with Pescara all the details of the late battle; declaring that he did

not regret the effort which he had made to secure his claims, and that had all his own army fought at Pavia like the marquis and his Basques, he should inevitably have gained the day. He spoke bitterly, however, of the defalcation of the Swiss and Italians; asserting that the military reputation of the former was irretrievably lost; while the latter were simply soldiers of parade, unequal to any thing beyond the mere pageantry of war. Of himself he said nothing; he had been worsted, and he felt that all comments upon the past were idle; but during the whole of the repast he discussed the subject as calmly, and with as much apparent indifference, as though his own interests had not been involved in its result.

When he rose from table, he addressed Pompérant, who had come in the train of M. de Bourbon, with unaffected warmth. "To you, Sir;" he said; "I owe, if not my life, at least my escape from insult and outrage. You have, I feel, acted upon principle, however it may have misled you, and henceforth the past shall be forgotten."

Before Pescara withdrew he assured the king that the emperor his master would take no ungenerous advantage of his success, and pledged himself to exert all the interest of which he was personally possessed, to ensure his speedy liberation upon terms consistent with his high dignity; and meanwhile he was consigned to the custody of M. d'Alarçon, who had succeeded Prosper Colonna in the command of the Spanish infantry.

By a fortunate chance it happened that one of the Spanish soldiers appointed to the night-guard of the king on the evening of his arrival at Pizzighittona, had cap-

tured a French gendarme, and being fearful of the escape of his prisoner should he entrust him to the custody of a comrade, he had introduced him to the guardroom, where he could keep an eye upon his movements. This gentleman, aware that the valets and other attendants of the monarch had, in their anxiety to secure their own safety, abandoned their duty, entreated his captor to permit him to offer his services to his royal master; representing the impossibility of his making an undue use of the privilege, and pledging himself to return when he had fulfilled his duty. To this proposition, after some demur, the Spaniard at length acceded; and with considerable diffidence the young volunteer presented himself before the august and embarrassed monarch, and tendered his assistance in his arrangements for the night. Francis instantly perceived that the intruder was a Frenchman; and as he paused upon the threshold of the chamber, exclaimed hastily—

"Before you enter, who are you, Sir?"

"I am one of the subjects of your Majesty;" was the reply; "Antoine des Préz, Seigneur de Montpezat, gentilhomme de Quercy, a man-at-arms in the company of the Maréchal de Foix; and am the prisoner of one of your guards."

"I thank you, Sir;" said the king; "but before I avail myself of your well-timed services, summon your captor to my presence."

When the Spaniard made his appearance, Francis inquired the amount of ransom he required for his prisoner, which, from the fact of Montpezat being a simple soldier, was necessarily trifling, the worthy Iberian little

suspecting that he was, at that moment, founding th fortunes of a future marshal of France.

"It is well;" said the monarch; "give him his liberty; I will be answerable, not only for the sum you name, but for an increase of a hundred crowns, the whole of which you shall receive ere long."

The man bowed and retired, overwhelmed with delight at his good fortune; while M. de Montpezat, still more bewildered by this sudden change in his destiny, remained in close attendance upon his sovereign, and soon won his regard and confidence.

Ere long, weary of a confinement so repugnant to his pride, Francis solicited permission to transmit a letter to the emperor, in which he entreated him to decide upon his future destiny, and threw himself upon his generosity in a style of supplication certainly not accordant with his kingly rank; and which, there can be little doubt, from the nature of Charles's disposition, and the bitter enmity he bore towards his worsted enemy, afforded him a triumph second only to his capture.

He nevertheless affected to receive the intelligence of his unhoped-for success with the most pious humility; and after having read the despatches in the midst of his court, retired to his oratory, where he remained a considerable time in prayer; finally forbidding all public demonstrations of rejoicing, and declaring that his only feeling of exultation arose from the conviction that he should now have leisure and opportunity to undertake a crusade against the Infidels, by whom the holy faith of Christendom was endangered.

Charles was too refined a hypocrite to betray his real feelings to the world.

CHAPTER II.

[1525.]

RESULTS OF THE BATTLE OF PAVIA—ANGUISH OF LOUISE DE SAVOIE—INDIGNATION OF MARGUERITE DE VALOIS—ANNIHILATION OF THE FRENCH ARMY—DISCONTENT OF THE PEOPLE—LAST INTERVIEW OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS D'ALENÇON—DEATH OF THE DUKE—THE PRINCES OF THE BLOOD—UNPOPULARITY OF THE REGENT — HER EFFORTS TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE CITIZENS—EXCITEMENT IN PARIS—RECAL OF THE TROOPS FROM ITALY—INSURRECTION OF THE GERMAN REFORMERS—THEY ARE DISPERSED BY THE COUNT DE GUISE—REQUISITION OF THE PARLIAMENT—LOUISE DE SAVOIE PERSECUTES THE LUTHERANS—ENERGY OF MARGUERITE DE VALOIS IN THEIR BEHALF—HER ISOLATION AT COURT—EXILE OF MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND AND DIANA OF POITIERS—VENGEANCE OF THE COUNT DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND — THE REGENT ENDEAVOURS TO CONCILIATE THE EUROPEAN POWERS — COOLNESS BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND—DEMANDS OF HENRY VIII.—CRAFT OF CHARLES V.—HENRY VIII. SIGNS A NEW TREATY WITH FRANCE — OPPRESSION OF ITALY BY THE IMPERIAL ARMY — CHARLES CONCLUDES A TRUCE WITH FRANCE — THE RANSOM OF FRANCIS DISCUSSED IN THE EMPEROR'S COUNCIL—TREACHERY OF LOUISE DE SAVOIE—ALARM OF THE IMPERIALIST GENERALS—CROOKED POLICY OF DE LANNOY — THE EMPEROR'S ENVOY — FRANCIS REJECTS THE PROPOSED CONDITIONS FOR HIS LIBERTY—CONSENTS TO PROCEED TO SPAIN—INTRIGUE OF DE LANNOY—THE KING EMBARKS—INDIGNATION OF BOURBON AND PESCARA—FRANCIS ARRIVES IN SPAIN—MUTINY IN THE ROYAL GUARD—SUPPRESSED BY THE KING—EXULTATION OF CHARLES V.—FRANCIS IS CONDUCTED TO MADRID, AND IMPRISONED IN THE ALCAZAR—INDIGNITIES OFFERED TO THE ROYAL CAPTIVE—BOURBON FOLLOWS THE KING TO MADRID — EXPOSTULATIONS OF BOURBON AND PESCARA—MORTIFICATIONS OF BOURBON—INTRIGUE OF JEROMIO MORONE—THE SECRET LEAGUE—THE OFFERED CROWN—PESCARA BETRAYS HIS FRIENDS—DUPLICITY OF CLEMENT VII. AND LOUISE DE SAVOIE—A SOBRIQUET—DOUBLE DEALING—MISPLACED CONFIDENCE — ARREST OF MORONE—DISSOLUTION OF THE LEAGUE—DEATH OF PESCARA—ARRIVAL OF MADAME D'ALENÇON IN SPAIN—SHE VISITS HER BROTHER—HER DISTRUST OF CHARLES V.—HER AUDIENCE—FALSE FAITH OF THE EMPEROR—SPIRITED REMONSTRANCES OF THE DUCHESS—HER FAILURE—SHE ENDEAVOURS TO EFFECT THE ESCAPE OF FRANCIS—A HOUSEHOLD QUARREL—THE TREACHEROUS ATTENDANT—THE EVASION PREVENTED—INCREASED HARDSHIPS OF THE FRENCH KING—THE EMPEROR MEDITATES THE ARREST OF THE PRINCESS—SHE IS WARNED BY BOURBON, AND ESCAPES.

CHAPTER II.

[1525.]

THE position of the French kingdom, when the disastrous intelligence of the defeat at Pavia reached its shores, was perilous in the extreme. Louise de Savoie, who, from the first, foreboded an evil issue to the hazardous enterprise of her son, had removed to Lyons in order to be early apprised of the operations in Italy; but, self-possessed as she was, she no sooner learnt the captivity of Francis, than throwing down the despatches she wrung her hands in agony, exclaiming—"Alas! he would not listen to my advice. He would not regard my warning. And yet I entreated him so earnestly not to commit this rashness."

"Madame;" said Marguerite de Valois, who stood beside her; "the king is merely unfortunate, and must yet redeem himself. M. d'Alençon is dishonoured, and has now only to die."

But Madame d'Angoulême could find little consolation in such a conviction. Able as she was in the science of government, she had, nevertheless, suffered her passions to control her judgment, and she knew that the hearts

of the French people were estranged from her. She had profited by the departure of her son to carry out many schemes of individual vengeance and favouritism; she had commenced a process against M. de Semblançay for an imaginary debt to herself, which he had resisted, and had consigned him to the Bastille, where he was then lingering out his days; she had permitted Duprat to pursue his system of extortion and tyranny; and now she beheld herself almost powerless, and beset by difficulty on every side. Not only was the king a captive, but the voice of mourning was universal. The highest and noblest of the land had fallen; and where she might otherwise have looked for sympathy, it was swallowed up in private sorrow. Even her high-souled daughter found the tears which she shed for her brother quenched by the burning blush of shame elicited by the cowardice of her husband—that husband who had been forced upon her by her now suffering mother. She might have gloried in the greatness of her brother even in his fall; but she shrank from the disgrace which had been drawn down upon herself.

The noblest army that France had ever sent forth was annihilated; the nobility upon which she prided herself were decimated; her hopes were gone; her strength was paralysed. The treasury was exhausted, the population impoverished by taxation, and the destruction of the kingdom apparently inevitable. The moment was a critical one to Louise de Savoie; for already murmurs arose among the people, who, weary of her rule, and despairing of the liberation of the monarch, began to discuss the claims of the several princes of the

blood, and to demand another and a more efficient ruler. Many shouted the name of Bourbon, and accused the regent of his defalcation; and had Henry VIII. at that crisis listened to the overtures of the rebel duke, and acceded to his demand of supplies and assistance, no doubt can exist that the crowns of France and England would have been united on his head. Henry, however, as we have already shown, distrusted the ambition of Bourbon, and his representations were consequently disregarded.

The next in rank was the Duke d'Alençon; but his claims were soon silenced. As a fugitive, dishonoured and disowned, he entered France; and when he reached Lyons was confronted with his indignant wife, whose reproaches heaped coals of fire upon his head. He would have explained, remonstrated, and entreated; but Marguerite de Valois disdained to listen.

"You have saved your life, Sir;" she said with cutting irony; "*your life!*—which must hereafter be a reproach, as it has long been useless both to yourself and others. You left your king to die; or, more bitter still, to remain the captive of an enemy—and you wore a sword. Shame on you, Sir! Shame on you, that you were afraid to use it! Had I been in your place, I would have saved you this disgrace; but all that I can now do is to refuse to share it. Do not mistake my tears; they do not fall for you, but for myself. I am compelled to bear your name, while my heart loathes it; but that is all the union which from this hour can exist between us. Even as you forsook my gallant brother in his hour of need, do I forsake you in my turn. Henceforth we are strangers to each other."

In another month the Duke d'Alençon was in his grave.

The third prince of the blood was M. de Vendôme, then governor of Picardy, who, although he had remained true to the royal cause, was nevertheless suspected of maintaining a correspondence with his cousin the Duke de Bourbon; but still the majority of the people, exasperated by the supremacy of Duprat, and the evil use which he had made of his influence over the regent, looked to Vendôme as their deliverer from utter ruin; and declared that the kingdom would be safer in his hands than in those of a foreign woman. Even sundry members of the parliament espoused his cause against Louise de Savoie, and pledged themselves to support his pretensions; while the regent herself, aware of her utter incapacity to allay the popular discontent, was no sooner apprised of his arrival in France, after having entrusted his command in Picardy to M. de Brienne, than she appointed him president of the council. At this juncture she evinced, moreover, a judgment and decision which almost redeemed her previous errors. She convoked meetings of the princes of the blood, the governors of provinces, and other influential functionaries, with whom she discussed the necessary measures for the restoration of the monarch and the security of the kingdom; she also took active measures to regulate and protect the public finances; and, finally, she treated the parliament with a respect and deference to which they had long been unaccustomed.

The excitement in Paris was, nevertheless, fearful. On the first news of the king's captivity, the parliament

summoned the Archbishop of Aix, the governor of the capital, and the principal municipal officers, to devise measures for the safety of the city; when it was determined that only five of the gates should remain open, and that a constant guard should be maintained, in which the counsellors were to act in concert with the citizens. Chains were stretched across the river, while others were prepared to close the streets; and the veteran warrior Montmorenci, whose two sons had fought at Pavia, (where the elder still remained a prisoner,) was summoned to Paris to take the command. The panic spread throughout the kingdom; all the principal towns followed the example given by the metropolis; public prayers were offered up for deliverance from an enemy whom each believed to be approaching; and the national terror was at its height. These pious orisons were, however, intermingled in the churches of the capital, with the denunciations which many of the preachers fulminated against the regent from their pulpits; while anonymous writings were scattered about the different thoroughfares, in which she, in conjunction with the chancellor, were accused as the authors of the present misery, and the people were earnestly called upon to resist her authority.

The remnant of that splendid army with which Francis had so proudly taken the field, was all the military force which now remained to France; and constant desertions had, even since the defeat at Pavia, considerably reduced its already inconsequent numbers. The troops were, however, recalled without delay; but as they were unable to traverse Italy, owing to its occu-

pation by the imperialists, gallies were despatched from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia, under the command of Andrea Doria[1] and La Fayette, to facilitate their return. The first measure of the regent upon the arrival of the exhausted army was to pay off all their arrears, which at once secured their fidelity; and she wisely followed up this act of justice by ransoming such of the prisoners still remaining in the hands of the enemy as were unable to liberate themselves.

Meanwhile an insurrection which threatened to involve important consequences had broken out upon the German frontier, where a fanatical and disorderly body of fifteen thousand men had taken up arms and marched upon the provinces of Burgundy and Champagne. Under the pretext of protecting and enforcing the rights of the reformed religion, which in reality impressed upon them the necessity of "peace and goodwill towards men," they committed the most fearful outrages; insisting that the precepts of the church should govern the

[1] Andrea Doria, born in 1468, at Oncilla, near Genoa, embraced the profession of arms, and entered the navy in the year 1492, where he distinguished himself against the Turks, the Moors, and the Levantine pirates. While in the service of Francis I, he defeated the fleet of Charles V. on the shores of Provence, and compelled the imperialists to raise the siege of Marseilles. To him France was also indebted for the reduction of Genoa in 1527. Worn out at length by the contempt of the French, and the ungracious return made for his services, he passed over to the emperor; drove the French from Genoa, where he refused to accept the title of doge; defeated the Turks, whom he compelled to evacuate Hungary and Austria; and possessed himself of the island of Corsica. Towards the close of his life, two several conspiracies were formed against him, both of which, however, failed; and he finally died at the advanced age of ninety-three years.

national policy, and meanwhile disgracing the cause which they affected to uphold by every description of violence and excess. Their career was, however, speedily terminated by the energy of the Count de Guise; who having raised a force of six thousand men, gave them battle, and so entirely routed their army, most of whom perished in the engagement, that they were unable to rally or to effect a second demonstration.

The result of this gallant enterprise tended greatly to allay the national panic, and many who had before utterly despaired, began to form brighter hopes of the future; but the promptitude, and even the success, of M. de Guise excited the indignation of the regent, who reproached him bitterly for having withdrawn from the capital the troops by which it was protected. By the parliament, however, the signal service which he had rendered to his country was fully estimated; nor did they hesitate (when Louise de Savoie despatched two of her counsellors to declare to them that the king had expressed his pleasure that she should take up her abode in the capital with his children,) to declare that all the misfortunes which had recently occurred had been brought upon the kingdom by the indulgence that had been shown to the Lutherans, whose utter extermination they required at her hands; they also subjoined other demands, such as the abolition of financial abuses, impossible to be accorded at a moment when the exigences of the kingdom were necessarily augmented by its unhappy position. Madame d'Angoulême consequently temporized with the parliament by pledging herself to persecute the unfortunate reformers; and as an earnest of her

sincerity, caused a learned man named Jacques Pavanes, who had been invited from his own province of Bourbonnais to Meaux by the Bishop of that place in consequence of his great attainments, to be arrested; and having put him upon his trial as a Lutheran convert, she suffered him to be burned alive in the Place de Grève. A second execution shortly followed, of which the victim was a reformer known as the Hermit of Livry, who underwent the same appalling sentence in front of the cathedral of Nôtre Dame, the great bell tolling throughout the whole period of the tragedy in order to assemble the people to the hideous spectacle. The firmness and piety with which the holy martyr endured his dying agonies were, however, so remarkable, that it is probable the effect produced upon the witnesses was very different from that which had been desired.

The anguish of mind endured during these frightful enormities by the Duchess d'Alençon was unbounded. Even her anxiety for her absent brother, and her mortification at the pusillanimity of her husband, were for a time forgotten. From the year 1523, when the persecution of the Lutherans commenced, she had openly declared herself, if not their convert, at least their advocate. Her efforts in their favour had been unceasing; and on several occasions she had incurred the displeasure of the king by her persevering remonstrances. So determined, indeed, was she to protect, in so far as she was able, those who were suffering for their adherence to the new faith, that she resented as a personal insult the arrest of her *valet-de-chambre*, Clement Marot the poet, who having been convicted of eating meat

during Lent, had been committed to prison; and in defiance of the Sorbonne and the inquisitor himself, she insisted upon, and obtained his release. It may therefore be imagined with what bitter sorrow she was compelled to witness the frightful acts of cruelty, which, instigated as they were by mere considerations of state policy, were nevertheless attributed to religious zeal. By her secret, but efficient aid, the celebrated Guillaume Farel was enabled to escape to Geneva, where he became a powerful preacher; and Jacques Fabri, one of the most learned doctors of the Sorbonne who had also embraced the reformed faith, was preserved from the flames, and ultimately pardoned.

While, however, she exulted in the partial success which crowned her righteous efforts, she had still only too much cause for grief. A great and undisguised coldness had grown up between herself and her mother, who resented her interference; and she had no longer about her person those friends and counsellors in whom she might have found consolation. Bourbon, the only man whom she had ever loved, was an attainted rebel in arms against his country. De Semblançay, to whom, like Francis himself, she had borne a strong affection, was a prisoner in the Bastille; and one of the regent's first acts of power had been to banish from the court her two chosen companions, Madame de Châteaubriand and Diana de Poitiers. To the first of these ladies, Marguerite de Valois, who was, as we have already stated, singularly indulgent to the frailties of her sex, particularly where the weakness ministered to the pleasures of her licentious but idolized brother, was tenderly

attached; and aware as she was of the violent character of the injured husband to whose guardianship the countess had been consigned by Madame d'Angoulême on her dismissal from the court, her mind was filled with the most gloomy forebodings.

These, as the result proved, were by no means unreasonable; for while the aged and solitary Louis de Brézé received back his young and lovely wife of whose fidelity he had rather feared than doubted, with a warm welcome which might have tended to arrest her in a career of profligacy, M. de Châteaubriand, on the contrary, greeted his guilty consort with the most bitter reproaches. Regardless alike of her tears and her attempts at explanation, he overwhelmed her with insult, reminding her that if he afforded the shelter of his roof to the mistress of the king, he merely accorded refuge to a criminal, and not a home to a wife. This change of position was so sudden and so violent, that whatever had been the misgivings of the countess during her enforced journey, the reality so far outran her anticipations that, guilty as she was, she writhed beneath the intemperate passion of her offended husband, and the extremity of her terror lent her strength.

"You are mad, Sir;" she said indignantly; "I am but what you yourself have made me. Young and ignorant of the world, you summoned me to a court where I was beset by temptations, and where you abandoned me to my fate. Your own cruelty and injustice forced me to dishonour; and now you seek to visit upon me the consequences of your imprudence. In obedience to your commands I left my home, and in accordance with

those of the king I remained at court. The result you must have foreseen."

"Madame;" retorted the count indignantly; "you know the falsehood of your assertion. Learn also that you are infamous, not only in my eyes, but in those of the whole nation."

"Enough, Sir, enough;" exclaimed the trembling woman, as she buried her face in her hands; "you follow up one cowardice by another; and have courage to avenge what you designate your wounded honour only when you know that I am defenceless."

"It is a lesson taught me by yourself;" was the bitter retort; "the protection of a monarch rendered you indifferent to the wrongs of a husband; but Providence is just, and you have no longer that monarch at your side to dispute my claims. We will not, however, waste more words upon a subject too hateful for discussion. Your apartments are prepared, and you must allow me to act as your usher."

As he ceased speaking he extended his hand; and the countess, still more anxious than himself to terminate so painful an interview, placed her own within it, and suffered him to lead her from the room. At the end of a long gallery he paused, and throwing back the door of a sequestered chamber, desired her to enter. On the threshold she paused with a cry of terror, and would have retreated, but it was already too late. The count forcibly drew her forward; and she found herself in a spacious apartment hung with black serge, in which the whole furniture consisted of a curtainless bed, a wooden chair, and a small statue of the Magdalen

affixed to the wall; while, as if to deepen the gloom of this repelling prison, all the windows had been carefully closed, and the only light by which it was illumined was dimly admitted through a sky-light constructed in the roof. Such was the new abode of the royal favourite—of the proud mistress who had dared a rivalry of power with the mother of her sovereign—of the minion of fortune who had long taught herself to forget the disgraceful price at which she had purchased her supremacy, and who had been accustomed to see the proudest nobles of a brilliant court at her feet. She was alone—alone with her brightest and her most bitter memories. She had no resource save the agonizing one of thought; for the companionship of the child whom she had wilfully abandoned she did not dare to ask; the attendance which was accorded to her was limited, and rendered in silence; her only nourishment, the felon's meal of bread and water; and, meanwhile, she knew that he who had once idolized her was beneath the same roof; that there was life and movement about her while she was shut out alike from all sight and sound of her fellow-beings, save for a few brief instants daily; and that he who might, and, as she fondly believed, would have avenged her, was a captive in a distant land, as powerless, if not as wretched, as herself.

The persecution of the Lutherans, active as it was, did not suffice to occupy the whole attention of the regent, who made the most energetic efforts to propitiate all the European potentates, whose influence might conduce to the liberation of her son; nor did she omit a strenuous attempt to conciliate the emperor himself,

whose apparent moderation and unostentatious humility deceived even her sagacity; while she laboured at the same time to produce a misunderstanding between such of the powers as were avowedly the enemies of France. Circumstances had combined to aid her policy upon this point; for, even before the battle of Pavia, a coldness had arisen between Henry VIII. and Charles, to which the kingdom of Francis in all probability owed its integral preservation. It is at least certain that had the English monarch maintained his alliance with the emperor, and attacked the French forces in Picardy during their reverses beyond the Alps, the exhausted and helpless position of the country must have rendered its conquest an easy one; but Wolsey had at length lost all faith in the specious and hollow promises of Charles, and considered himself personally aggrieved; while Henry resented the insult offered to his daughter, to whom the emperor, as we have already stated, had betrothed himself, by the fact that that potentate had recently demanded the hand of Isabella of Portugal, wilfully overlooking the fact that he had, on his side, endeavoured to effect an alliance between the affianced Princess Mary and the King of Scotland. Both sovereigns had moreover failed to observe the treaty by which they were pledged to a simultaneous invasion of the French territories; and each, forgetful or careless of his own failure, was loud in condemning that of his ally.

Under these circumstances the English king replied to the communication of the emperor which conveyed to him the intelligence of the victory of Pavia, by advancing claims which were well calculated to produce a rupture

between the two countries. He insisted that Charles should not enter into any treaty with Francis which did not favour his own pretensions to the French crown; that he should immediately march his army into the French territories; and that the person of the captive monarch should be delivered into his own custody, in accordance with a clause in the treaty into which they had severally entered, and by which each sovereign bound himself to deliver over to his ally any prince taken in rebellion against the opposite party.

To demands of so arrogant a nature as these he had, of course, never anticipated that the victorious emperor would accede; but Charles was nevertheless too wary to express his sense of their presumption. His reply was guarded and evasive; and Henry, impatient of a policy whose results could never be anticipated, at length invited Madame d'Angoulême to despatch ambassadors to his court with whom he might negotiate. Accordingly, two plenipotentiaries were appointed, entrusted with full powers to effect a defensive alliance between France and England; and instructed, if possible, to detach Henry at any price from the interests of Charles. Predisposed to a change of policy, the English king readily listened to their arguments; alienated himself from the cause of the emperor; and finally, on the 30th of August, (1525,) signed a new treaty of alliance with Francis, wherein the latter acknowledged himself the debtor of the English king in the sum of two millions of golden crowns, which he engaged to pay within twenty years, at the rate of a hundred thousand crowns yearly; and the arrears of income due to the dowager-queen, the

widow of Louis XII, were at the same time regulated.

While these measures were in operation, the Italian states were overrun by the victorious army of Charles, and were suffering all the horrors of foreign domination. Intoxicated by success, demoralized by relaxed discipline, destitute of pecuniary resources, and rendered arrogant by impunity, the imperialist troops had become the scourge of the whole country. They had exacted heavy sums from the Duke of Ferrara and the republic of Lucca, and even demanded fresh supplies from the pope and the Venetians; while their principal officers did not hesitate openly to declare the resolution of the emperor to possess himself of the whole of Italy. In this emergency the Venetians despatched an ambassador to England, who was instructed to impress upon Henry VIII. the necessity of preserving the equilibrium of Europe; and the pope, anxious to protect himself against the threatened aggression, caused his apostolical datary to write to his nuncio in London, instructing him to join in the league.

This circumstance decided the measures of Charles, who ultimately replied to the envoys of Louise de Savoie by conceding a truce of six months, which were to be devoted to the negotiations for the liberation of Francis; of which the terms were forthwith debated in the imperial councils. With a moderation and generosity which did credit to his sacred profession, the Bishop of Osma[1] suggested that the captive monarch should be at once restored to liberty on the sole condition of his marrying

[1] The confessor of the emperor.

the widowed queen Eleonora, whose hand had been promised to Bourbon; a step by which the emperor would secure a firm ally, and win the admiration of all Europe; but this advice suited neither the vindictiveness of Charles, nor the jealousy of his friends, and was at once overruled. The imperial chancellor then voted for the perpetual imprisonment of the unfortunate young king; a measure by which the emperor would definitively rid himself of a dangerous enemy, and be enabled to undertake his crusade against the Turks without a rival to his glory. This suggestion, however, flattering as was the prospect so skilfully held out, by no means satisfied such of the council as were anxious for the degradation of France; and finally the advice of the Duke of Alba[1] was adopted, which was to demand an enormous sum as the personal ransom of Francis; and, moreover, to exact conditions of a nature so rigorous as to cripple his power, impoverish his resources, and recruit the exhausted finances of the empire.

While these deliberations were proceeding Louise de Savoie was not idle, but endeavoured to ingratiate herself with the emperor by betraying the allies whom she

[1] Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alba, was the representative of an illustrious Spanish family. He gained for Charles V. (in 1547) the battle of Muhlberg against the Elector of Saxony, and was appointed governor of Milan in 1555. Philip II. made him, in the following year, the governor of the Low Countries, which revolted against his despotism and cruelty. He consequently resigned his charge in 1573, and died nine years subsequently at the advanced age of eighty. He had caused during his career the execution of 18,000 individuals; and excited a war which lasted throughout sixty-eight years, cost Spain eight hundred millions of crowns, and finally deprived her of seven Flemish provinces.

had seduced by her promises. She was anxious to inspire him with apprehensions for the safety of Italy, trusting that by this treacherous policy she might compel more favourable terms for the ransom of her son. Once more, however, she was deluded by her hopes; for Charles was even better informed than herself of the events which were in progress; and so well aware of the importance of the advantage he had gained, that although he did not scruple to avail himself of her bad faith, and even courteously to acknowledge his sense of the obligation, he never wavered for an instant in his intentions.

His generals in Italy were, however, less confident than himself. The old jealousies had been revived; their three chiefs no longer acted in unison; the soldiers mutinied for their arrears of pay; the Italians were ripe for revolt against their oppressors, and there was reason to apprehend that they would attempt to effect the liberation of the still unransomed prisoners. A double guard, commanded by Pescara and Bourbon, was consequently placed about the person of the French king, and every precaution taken to prevent a surprise; but Francis had near his person a more insidious enemy than either the rebel duke or the Spanish general. Lannoy, the favourite of Charles, who however inferior to both in military talent far exceeded them in subtlety, aware that the royal captive could never be wholly in the power of his conqueror until within the Spanish frontier, had resolved to effect his removal without the knowledge of his unsuspecting colleagues; and he constantly laboured to impress upon Francis the great advantage which must accrue from his evincing a perfect confidence in the

emperor, and soliciting a removal to Madrid, where they might personally confer together.

Weary of his dreary prison at Pizzighittona, and thirsting for some relief to the monotony of his existence, the young king listened readily to the specious representations and arguments of his false adviser; and he was yet wavering, when the arrival of M. de Beaurain, Seigneur de Rœux,[1] was announced to him, with despatches from the emperor. The envoy was at once admitted, and with a hasty gesture Francis tore open the packet; but the hot blood rushed to his cheek as he examined its contents, and he had no sooner ceased reading than he drew his dagger from its sheath, and vehemently exclaimed that he would sooner meet death from his own hand than submit to conditions which involved the degradation and ruin of his kingdom.

M. d'Alarçon, who was present at the interview, alarmed by the passionate attitude of his prisoner, and apprehensive that in the first burst of his indignation he might carry his threat into execution, seized his arm and besought him to calm himself; but it was long ere the unfortunate monarch could be appeased; and as he hurriedly paced the apartment he repeated bitterly and incessantly the terms proposed by the emperor. They were, indeed, crushing alike to his hopes as an individual, and to his dignity as a sovereign; and such as Charles

[1] M. de Rœux was the cup-bearer of the emperor, and a man of considerable military reputation, who had risen to high rank through the influence of his imperial master. His hatred to the French nation was intense, and he was accustomed to declare that he considered every moment lost in which he was not engaged against them. He was ultimately made prisoner before Naples by Filippo Doria.

could never anticipate would be accepted. He required of Francis to cede his claims upon both Naples and Milan; to relinquish the duchy of Burgundy, and his sovereignty over Flanders and Artois; to effect a reconciliation with the Duke de Bourbon, and to detach in his favour from the crown of France the whole of Provence and the other territories formerly possessed by the ex-connétable, which were to form a separate kingdom under that prince; and, finally, to make full compensation for all the claims of the King of England upon the emperor.

Deluded as he had been by the apparent moderation of Charles into the belief that his liberation would have involved no ruin upon his country, the disappointment and mortification of Francis amounted to despair; and it was only after having vented the agony of his spirit that he could command sufficient self-possession to make the reply for which the envoy still waited; but at length he paused, and said coldly and proudly—

"I will not detain you longer, Sir. Return to the emperor your master, and tell him that never, so long as I have life, will I submit to the degradation of complying with such conditions as those of which you have been the bearer. Here is my final and irrevocable answer. I will accept the hand of the queen his sister; and I will bestow upon the Duke de Bourbon that of the Duchess d'Alençon, restoring to him upon his marriage all his former possessions. I will, moreover, discharge the engagements of the emperor with the King of England, pay a heavy personal ransom, and furnish troops when he shall proceed to Rome for his coronation. More than

this I will not concede, though I remain a prisoner till the day of doom."

At his next interview with M. de Lannoy, Francis inveighed bitterly against the insult which had been offered to him by Charles; and the viceroy seized so favourable an opportunity to urge the acceptance of the proposition which he had already submitted to the royal prisoner, that he should at once proceed to Spain, and treat personally with the emperor; assuring him that when all extraneous influence was removed, a treaty satisfactory to both parties would soon be accomplished.

At once sanguine and confiding, Francis readily fell into the snare; but Lannoy had still many difficulties to overcome. In order to reach Spain it was necessary to cross a sea upon which the fleet of Andrea Doria and the gallies of La Fayette were greatly superior both in strength and numbers to the navy of the emperor; while De Lannoy was equally reluctant to trust his prisoner within the walls of Marseilles lest he should be liberated by the people. He had, therefore, no alternative but to extract a pledge from Francis that he would not avail himself of any such attempt, but proceed in his custody to Spain, whatever demonstrations might be made by his subjects. The pledge was given, bitter as it must have been to the high-hearted young monarch; and the wily viceroy had subsequently little difficulty in persuading him to despatch Montmorenci (who still remained a prisoner,) to the regent, with instructions to forward six of his gallies as hostages to Genoa, and to disarm the remainder. The maréchal departed on his ill-omened errand; and the next step taken by De Lannoy was to

induce his two colleagues to remove the king from Pizzighittona to Genoa, under the guard of M. d'Alarçon, as to a place of greater safety.

Unsuspicious of his purpose, and anxious to ensure the safe keeping of their prisoner, both Bourbon and Pescara were easily persuaded to adopt this apparently politic measure; and, accordingly, towards the end of May, the king left the fortress under an escort of three hundred lances and four thousand infantry. He had not long reached Genoa, however, ere De Lannoy suddenly effected his embarkation, announcing his intention of conveying him to Naples; in which direction he steered until he encountered the six French gallies which he was to detain as hostages, under the guard of Spanish soldiers; but having seen these troops on board the several French vessels, he once more set sail on the 7th of June, for Spain, where, at the termination of the voyage, he deposited his prisoner in the fortress of Xativa, in Valentia.

Only a few days subsequent to their landing, a tumult broke out in the royal guard, who clamoured for their arrears of pay, and uttered such threats against De Lannoy, that in order to secure his personal safety he was compelled to make his escape over the roofs of the adjacent houses; while the troops, exasperated by his apparent disregard of their claims, discharged their firearms at the windows, and narrowly escaped wounding the king, several of the balls having entered the apartment which he occupied. Undismayed by the danger, Francis at once approached a window, and with firm and dignified affability expostulated with the mutineers, scattering some money among them, and representing

the dangerous result of such a demonstration to themselves. Had he, observes Brantôme, taken advantage of their enthusiasm at that moment, he might in all probability have induced them to make sail with him to France; but tempting as the opportunity undoubtedly was, Francis had pledged his royal word to De Lannoy that he would make no attempt at evasion: and this consideration alone must have caused him to reject the project had it even occurred to him.

Nothing could exceed the exultation of Charles when he ascertained that his defeated rival was safely lodged in a Spanish fortress, and entirely in his power; for, although he affected the greatest sympathy in his misfortunes, and strictly forbade any public rejoicings at his own success, the honours and rewards which he lavished upon De Lannoy were sufficient evidence of his real feelings. He immediately despatched an order to the viceroy to proceed to Madrid with his prisoner; but instead of receiving him in person, as had been anticipated by Francis, he remained at Toledo, as if unconscious of his arrival in his dominions. Nor was this mortification lessened by the fact that instead of the honourable treatment which he had been led to expect, he found himself a close prisoner, constantly attended by M. d'Alarçon, and only permitted to leave the castle occasionally for exercise, mounted upon a sluggish mule, and surrounded by an armed guard. The treachery of De Lannoy could no longer be doubted, and while the arrogant viceroy was reaping the rich reward of his double-dealing, the unhappy monarch found himself the dupe of his own overweening confidence.

Exhausted by disappointment, self-upbraiding, and regret; wounded in his pride, outraged in his dignity, and deceived on every side, the spirit of Francis at length gave way, and he became seriously indisposed." Seven months of weariness and restraint had already passed, and he had never once had an interview with the emperor; while so closely was he watched that he could not utter a word or receive a communication which was not overheard and registered. The strength of the old castle in which he was confined might have appeared a sufficient guarantee for his safety, but it was evident that every precaution and constraint which could add to his annoyance was industriously superadded. None had access to him save by the sanction of the emperor himself, and every pretext was seized for withholding it. Every one who approached him was a spy, and his requests were met by a cold indifference which compelled him to keep silence.

The agony of mind endured by the Duchess d'Alençon during this period was intense. She had actively urged forward the negotiations for his release, and more than once flattered herself that the termination of his captivity was at hand; but Charles V. never failed to find some excuse for delay, and as communication between the two countries had been rendered extremely difficult by the jealous policy of the emperor, it was at last almost by accident that the intelligence of the king's illness was made known in France.

The first rumour which reached the court was that of his death, and for several days the most fearful uncertainty prevailed; but eventually the truth was

ascertained, and Marguerite de Valois was no sooner assured that he still lived than she applied for a safe-conduct, and permission to reside in Spain during two months. In vain was she reminded of the bad faith of Charles, and of the probability of his being unable to resist the temptation of securing another prisoner of such importance, and thus increasing his already extortionate demands of ransom; no argument could withhold her. Since the disgrace of her husband, she had lived only in her brother—the life of that idolized brother was in peril—and with the heroism of a true woman's heart, she did not suffer one thought of self to militate against her purpose. Thus the guarantee which she had asked was no sooner reluctantly conceded, than she made instant preparations for commencing her journey. Before she could reach Madrid, however, the low fever which was consuming the king had increased to so alarming a degree, that the physicians who were in attendance upon him ventured to announce to the emperor that, unless some means were adopted to arouse him from the lethargy into which he was rapidly sinking, it would be impossible to save his life.

This report greatly alarmed the selfish Charles, who, however little interest he had shown in his captive, was keenly alive to the enormous loss which he should sustain by his death; and he accordingly resolved to visit him, and to inspire hopes which might give a new impulse to his mind. On learning his intention, the chancellor Mercurio Gattinara endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, alleging that, should he persist in such a resolution, his own honour and dignity would

compel him to release Francis at once and unconditionally; but Charles was unable or unwilling to recognise this necessity, and he accordingly proceeded to the Alcazar without loss of time, and approached the bed of the dying monarch with a smile of courtesy and kindness upon his lips.

Francis had no sooner recognised his visitor, than, although in a state of great exhaustion, he made an effort to raise himself to a sitting posture, murmuring faintly: "Your Majesty is then come at last to see your prisoner expire."

"Do not say my prisoner;" was the bland reply; "but rather my brother and my friend. Have faith in me, for I have exerted all my energies to accomplish your liberation, which will speedily be effected."

The royal invalid, deluded by his own hopes, listened with avidity; a long and apparently friendly conversation ensued; and when the imperial hypocrite at length prepared to depart, he uttered the most earnest entreaties that Francis would be careful of his health, and not aggravate his disease by anxieties which were groundless. The effect of this assurance was electrical; the recovery of the king was accelerated by his brightened prospects; and he began to look forward with confidence to an early return to France.

The exasperation of the two baffled generals whom the wily diplomatist had outwitted, was beyond all bounds. Bourbon at once proceeded to Madrid, for the double purpose of urging his claims and preventing any treaty with Francis in which he was not included, and of exposing the base deceit of De Lannoy, whom he accused

in the imperial presence of perfidy and cowardice; while Pescara in his turn addressed an intemperate letter to the emperor, in which he complained that the viceroy had hurried to Spain to receive the applause of a victory, and to exhibit the French king as his prisoner, when he had neither contributed to the one, nor taken the other; but had, on the contrary, endeavoured to evade the battle, in which he had, moreover, shown such cowardice that he had trembled with terror, and constantly exclaimed that *all was lost.* In conclusion he declared him to be a poltroon and a traitor; and asserted that he was ready to prove it upon his body.

These representations, however, produced no effect upon Charles; while the distrust felt by the haughty Castilian nobility towards Bourbon induced them rather to exult in the craft of De Lannoy than to condemn it. So great, indeed, was the contempt which they professed for him, that when the Marquis de Villana was applied to by the emperor to lend his palace to the ex-connétable, who had been unable to secure a commodious residence, he replied coldly: "I can refuse nothing to your imperial Majesty; M. de Bourbon may inhabit my palace if it be your pleasure that he shall do so; but I pledge my word as a Castilian, that when he sees fit to vacate it, I will burn it to the ground rather than again take shelter under a roof which has been polluted by the presence of a traitor."

The position of the rebel duke was bitter in the extreme. His claims met with no attention; his services were disregarded; and he found himself an object of suspicion and dislike to all around him. The emperor

treated him with the most chilling indifference; and the French king, when he was occasionally admitted to his presence, with an exaggerated courtesy which betrayed his want of confidence. Charles felt that he had no longer any thing to fear from the once powerful duke, and Francis had lost faith in his honour.

Meanwhile Pescara, who had now the sole command of the army in Italy, did not affect to conceal his discontent. He had served the emperor with zeal and fidelity, and the injustice by which he was now rewarded aroused within him the recollection that he was an Italian, and that he was even at that moment labouring to destroy the liberties of his country. Unlike Bourbon, he found many to sympathise with him; and his exasperation became at length so violent that Jeromio Morone, the chancellor of Francisco Sforza, and one of the boldest and most able diplomatists of the age, who had for some time been planning a secret league against the emperor which was to embrace France, England, Florence, and Venice, confided his project to Pescara; and informed him that, on condition of his disbanding the imperial army which alone could prevent its success, these powers were ready to confer upon him the crown of Naples.

The temptation was great; all the plans of Morone were matured; and the regent of France had pledged herself to march an army into Lombardy to support the independence of Italy. Pescara listened, and for a time wavered; but it is probable that his hesitation was brief, as Charles was ere long warned of his danger by the marquis himself, who revealed to him that a conspiracy

had been formed against his authority, of which he would furnish all the details when he had ascertained the identity of its authors.

Nor was Pescara the only individual who volunteered this revelation; Clement VII, although involved in the plot, having written to inspire him with misgivings of the fidelity of his principal officers, from what motive does not appear; while Louise de Savoie availed herself of the safe-conduct conceded to her daughter to forward letters to the emperor, in which she represented that, if he did not desire to see the whole of Europe in arms against him, he must modify, if not entirely withdraw, his claims on France.

To this last communication Charles returned, as was his wont, a cold and evasive reply; fully maintaining his right to the *sobriquet* which the French wits, who never fail to create a *mot* even from their misfortunes, had bestowed on him of *Charles qui triche;* a somewhat lame play upon his familiar appellation of *Charles d'Autriche.* To Pescara, however, he vouchsafed a different answer; assuring him, that, although doubts had been suggested of his loyalty, he had never personally entertained them; and instructing him to maintain a perfect understanding with the conspirators, betraying neither coldness nor suspicion, but affecting an inclination to avail himself of the overtures made to him by Francisco Sforza, while he suffered no means to escape by which the discovery of the real culprits might be accomplished. Acting upon this suggestion, Pescara invited Morone to visit him at Novarra, and upon his arrival concealed da Leyva behind the tapestried hangings of

the apartment in which the interview was to take place.

This perfidious arrangement effected, he overwhelmed the chancellor with questions; declaring that he could not commit himself to any measure of which he did not thoroughly comprehend both the motives and the identity of the authors; assuming, meanwhile, so determined an attitude, that Morone, who feared that he might abandon the cause of the league, at length entered into the most minute details, among which was the meditated assassination of da Leyva, his unsuspected auditor. At the conclusion of the conference, the marquis parted from his visitor with calm courtesy; but as he was about to leave the house he was encountered by da Leyva, who at once arrested him in the name of the emperor.

The capture of Morone, and the important disclosures by which it had been preceded, necessarily put an immediate stop to the conspiracy; the imperialists took possession of the fortresses in the Milanese; and Sforza made instant preparations for a desperate, although almost hopeless, defence; notwithstanding that he was at that moment suffering from fever of so virulent a nature that his death was anticipated. Nothing, therefore, appeared to oppose the entire conquest of the duchy; and Charles already anticipated this result, when news of the sudden demise of Pescara reached Spain. Popular rumour ascribed his death to poison, and it is certain that the act of treachery of which he had been guilty had excited against him the hatred of all the Italian princes, who had vowed vengeance upon his perfidious dealing. Be this as it might, however, the brave Pescara, whose

career had hitherto been untarnished, but who had now sullied his name with a stain which could never be effaced, expired at the early age of six-and-thirty; not on the field of honour, and surrounded by sympathy and admiration, but supinely in his bed, the object of execration and reproach. During his last moments he confided the care of his wife Victoria Colonna, and his Spanish troops, to the Marquis del Guasto his cousin, who inherited his estates; and on the 30th of November, 1525, terminated his brief, and, with one exception, glorious career.

Meanwhile the Duchess d'Alençon, having embarked at Aigues-Mortes, landed at Barcelona, and proceeded at once to Madrid, where she was met on entering the gates by the emperor, who proposed to escort her in person to the residence of her brother; a courtesy which she was compelled to accept, although well aware that it was dictated rather by policy than kindness. She accordingly mounted a fresh palfrey which had been prepared for her, and without waiting to throw off her travelling dress, rode through the streets of the city at the right hand of Charles, who was attended by a brilliant suite. At this interview the tenderness of the woman so completely masked the vigour of the diplomatist, that even the wily emperor formed a false estimate of her character. He had, during their ride to the Alcazar, given her the most cheering assurances of the recovery of Francis; but Marguerite no sooner entered his apartment, threw herself into his arms, and listened to the faltering tones of his voice, than she became aware how easily she had suffered herself to be beguiled.

"Can it indeed be you, *ma mignonne?*" murmured the king as he returned her caresses, heedless of the presence of his imperial visitor; "Oh, Marguerite, how dear, how inexpressibly welcome is this meeting; destined, perhaps, to be our last."

"And wherefore?" asked the duchess energetically; "yours is, believe me, a generous enemy, who will not even seek to resist my tears. He knows that you have already suffered deeply both in body and mind. Thus you see that I am the earnest of good fortune."

"I have already striven against my despair;" said Francis gloomily; "I had even, for a time, dared to hope; but I have learnt much, very much, Marguerite, since we parted, and there are wounds of the heart which will not close."

The interview was a brief one, both Francis and his sister confining themselves to generalities until they could converse without restraint; and Charles having once more bade his "good brother," as he called the royal prisoner, be of better cheer, and trust to his sincerity, conducted the duchess to the residence which had been prepared for her; with the assurance that he was ready, since she had been entrusted with the negotiation by the regent, to accede to such terms as could not fail to be acceptable to so welcome an ambassadress.

Marguerite was, however, so well aware of the bad faith of the fair-seeming emperor, that she did not suffer herself to be deluded by such a promise; and when he had withdrawn, she hastened to take counsel of Philippe de Villiers, the grand-master of the knights of Malta, the Archbishop of Embrun, M. de Selva, the first president

of Paris, and the Seigneurs de Montmorenci and de Brion, by whom she had been accompanied to Spain; and who urged her if possible to conciliate Bourbon, and to form an acquaintance with the widowed Queen Eleanora, whom Francis had offered to espouse. Charles V, however, anticipating that she would take the latter step, had induced his sister to make a pilgrimage to Guadaloupe, whence she did not return until the duchess had left Spain.

The delight of Marguerite on finding herself once more near her idolized brother may be appreciated, when it is stated that, on first receiving the intelligence of his illness, she had exclaimed in the agony of her despair; "Whosoever shall announce to me the recovery of the king, that messenger, though he be heated, jaded, and sullied by the filth of the roads over which he may have travelled, I will embrace and welcome as I would the proudest prince or nobleman of France; and should he have no bed to rest upon, I will give him mine, and sleep upon the boards, to recompense him for the precious tidings which he brings me."

On the 4th of October, Marguerite de Valois had her first official audience of the emperor; and her extreme beauty, her uncommon intellect, her startling eloquence, and, above all, the bold and uncompromising fearlessness of her spirit, were well calculated to produce a strong impression upon his mind. It is, moreover, probable that the knowledge of her royal brother's convalescence inspired her with additional energy; for she was unconscious that this very circumstance militated against her hopes; Charles, having ceased to tremble for the life

of his prisoner, being less than ever inclined to permit his prey to escape him. Even his avarice was silenced by his desire of vengeance; he now saw himself without a rival in Europe, and gloried in the conviction; while he was conscious that Francis, once more at liberty, might yet establish a balance fatal to his ambition.

In this temper, therefore, the emperor felt little inclination to be contravened by a woman; albeit that woman was one of the loveliest and most intellectual of the age. In order to defer the conference, he had removed suddenly to Toledo; but Madame d'Alençon had no sooner satisfied herself that the health of her royal brother was amended by her care and sympathy, and received from him full powers to act in his name and on his behalf, than she determined to follow him to that city, attended by M. de Villiers.

Previously to quitting the capital, however, she had invited the Duke de Bourbon to visit her, and her summons was instantly obeyed. Old associations and memories to which neither ventured to allude, but which exerted a powerful influence over both parties, rendered mutual confidence easy; and before the ex-connétable took his leave he revealed to Marguerite the real designs of the emperor, in so far as they had been entrusted to him; assuring her that she had nothing to hope from either the generosity or the justice of Charles, but must act throughout upon the defensive. Strong in this conviction, therefore, she proceeded to Toledo, where she was received with a cold courtesy, which might have damped a less energetic spirit; but which, as we have shown, produced no such effect upon that of Marguerite

de Valois. The evident constraint of the emperor aroused her pride, and she opened the subject in a manner at once firm and dignified, by demanding to know the decision at which he had arrived. Charles briefly replied that he had already submitted his conditions to the king himself.

"By whom;" said Marguerite; "your imperial Majesty has long been aware that they were definitely declined. I have therefore now only to learn your determination as to those which the king my brother offered to concede."

"They are inadmissible, Madame; the hand of the Queen of Portugal is pledged to the Duke de Bourbon, who alone can release it."

"But I am prepared, Sir, to assure your Majesty that M. de Bourbon will not persist in his claim, now that he is aware of the views of his sovereign. This difficulty is consequently at an end, and we have only to discuss the remaining clauses of the treaty."

"I have referred the whole matter to my ministers;" said Charles stolidly; "and in their hands I am resolved to leave it."

"And is this, Sir, indeed to be the result of the fair promises with which you have beguiled both my brother and myself?" asked the duchess with a gesture of indignation which she did not even seek to disguise. "Are you in truth prepared to persevere in a course which must draw down upon you the contempt and abhorrence of all the princes of Christendom? Have you forgotten that Francis of France is your sovereign lord, and that you owe him homage for your Flemish provinces? Is a consciousness of your own temporary power to blind

you to the fact that, by your present want of honour and good faith, you are alienating for ever the heart of the noblest sovereign in Europe, and converting one who might prove a powerful friend into an implacable enemy? Surely, Sir, you cannot have duly considered these things—will not the world attribute to fear a measure so unprecedented as that of retaining a brother monarch in captivity? Nor, even should your prisoner, like the caged eagle, droop and die behind the bars which you have forged about him, will you be safe from the vengeance of his successors; for he has sons, Sir, whose first and holiest duty it will become to avenge their father's wrongs."

"I have on my side much to complain of at his hands, Madame;" said the emperor.

"Name your wrongs, Sir;" replied Marguerite; "and they shall be redressed. Has he attempted to usurp your territories? Has he rewarded the rebellion of your most powerful noble by present favour and brilliant promises? Has he offered to him a crown, and the hand of a widowed queen? or has he met your open hostility with crafty policy, and covert wrong?"

"Should M. de Bourbon resign the hand of my royal sister as you allege, Madame, I am willing to forego my purpose of making him an independent sovereign. Further than this I will not concede."

"I am ready, Sir;" persisted the duchess; "to double the sum which has been already offered to your Majesty for the ransom of the king, as well as to ratify the other conditions made by himself. That is my boundary also; and one which I cannot overpass."

"Then, Madame;" said Charles, as he rose from his seat; "our conference is ended. The remainder of this unhappy business must be arranged by my ministers, and in their hands, as I before remarked, I leave it."

"Pardon me if I yet delay your Majesty a moment;" said the duchess, as she drew from her bosom a small packet, which she unfolded. "Here, Sir, is an act of abdication drawn up by the king my brother, to be put in force in the event of an obduracy, which, nevertheless, he had not been led to anticipate at your hands. By this document he has transferred the sovereignty of France to his elder son, M. le Dauphin; confirmed the regency of Madame d'Angoulême; and, in case of her demise, entrusted it to myself; reserving meanwhile the right of resuming the crown whenever and however he may recover his liberty."

A cold and doubtful smile passed over the lips of Charles. He too well understood the character of his rival to credit for a moment that he possessed the extent of moral courage requisite for such a sacrifice; and strong in this conviction, he remained silent; only replying to the energetic princess by a second bow, more imperious and significative than the first.

Thus tacitly dismissed, Madame d'Alençon had no alternative but to withdraw, which she did, as firmly and as haughtily as she had entered; and leaving the counsellors who had accompanied her from France to discuss the question of a compromise with those of the emperor, she returned to Madrid to take leave of her brother; the period to which her safe-conduct extended having nearly expired.

Painfully convinced that there was indeed nothing to be hoped from the good feeling or chivalry of Charles, the duchess no sooner found herself again in the Spanish capital than she resolved, if possible, to effect the escape of the royal prisoner; and, after conceiving, and dismissing as impracticable, a variety of schemes, she at length decided upon one, of which both the ingenuity and courage did credit to her high and indomitable spirit.

Among the scanty attendance conceded to Francis was a negro, whose duty it was to supply the apartments with fuel. This man, who in height and figure greatly resembled the captive, Madame d'Alençon attempted to conciliate, an endeavour in which she easily succeeded; and, in a short time, by present kindness, and promises for the future, he became so entirely devoted to her wishes, that he declared himself ready to undertake any thing which she desired, however great might be the danger attending it.

This point gained, no time was lost, and it was arranged that so soon as proper preparations were made, the princess should take leave of her brother; and that, at dusk on the same day, the negro should carry in his accustomed load of wood for the consumption of the night; Francis in the mean time having stained his hands and face with a black dye. The king was then to exchange clothes with his deliverer, who was to retire to bed, as if overcome by the grief and fatigue of parting from his sister, while the captive himself was to leave the castle, and as rapidly as possible rejoin Madame d'Alençon and her friends, by whom the most cautious

arrangements had been made to secure his safety from detection.

Up to the last week nothing occurred which could create the slightest fear of failure; but it unfortunately happened that two of the king's personal attendants, both of whom were Frenchmen, and consequently aware of the intended evasion, chanced to have an altercation, in the course of which, M. Clerment Champion, a gentleman of the bed-chamber, received a blow, of which he complained loudly to his royal master. Francis, however, who was absorbed in his prospect of escape, and unwilling to remonstrate severely with those upon whose fidelity and assistance he now relied, affected to treat the matter lightly, and refused to interfere in what he considered merely as a temporary misunderstanding. Unhappily, Champion conceived his honour to be involved, and became so indignant when he discovered that the king refused to resent the insult which had been offered to him, that, in the first rush of passion, he left the castle and proceeded to Toledo, where, having obtained an audience of the emperor, he disclosed all the particulars of the proposed flight.

The conduct of Charles upon this occasion was perfectly consistent with his character. He expressed his surprise and regret that the monarch of France should have degraded himself by so unworthy and contemptible a design, and merely desired that the negro should be dismissed; but while affecting this moderation, and even indifference, he nevertheless caused the statements of Champion to be reduced to writing, and properly attested; after which he caused them to be forwarded to

the captain of the guard, with such orders as soon made it evident to the king that his project had been discovered. The vigilance of those about him increased to inconvenience; and the presence of d'Alarçon, who had lately relaxed somewhat in his obtrusiveness, became perpetual, while he was deprived of the services of his most devoted attendants.

Madame d'Alençon no sooner ascertained the failure of her hopes, than she again demanded an audience of the emperor, at which she expostulated warmly and bitterly upon the increase of severity experienced by her brother; attributing the whole plan of the evasion to herself, and reminding him that his own injustice had driven Francis to accede to her request. Charles listened courteously; and not daring to doubt that she must ultimately succeed in restoring the king at least to his former comparative liberty and comfort, she suffered day by day to elapse while she awaited the anticipated concession. No sign of relenting, however, escaped the emperor; and at length she was warned by Bourbon, that since the discovery had taken place an addition had been made to her safe-conduct of the words "provided she has attempted nothing prejudicial to the emperor or the nation;" adding that he had ascertained it to be the intention of Charles to arrest her, should she remain within the Spanish territories an hour beyond the appointed time; and to retain her a prisoner until the king should consent to accept the proposed conditions for their mutual release. The high-spirited Marguerite, who had never for an instant suspected that the emperor

could meditate so unmanly an act of treachery, now found that she had not an instant to lose; and, consequently, ordering her escort, she at once set forth upon her homeward journey notwithstanding the severity of the weather; despatching a messenger to the Count Clermont de Lodeve, the governor of Narbonne, to request him to meet her at Salces with a body of armed men. In eight days she accomplished the distance usually performed in twice the time; and at nightfall of the very day on which her safe-conduct expired she reached Roussillon, where the imperial troops by whom she had been followed saw her surrounded by a force with which they were unable to compete, and consequently retired.

CHAPTER III.

[1526.]

DESPAIR OF FRANCIS—RECALLS HIS ACT OF ABDICATION—BESETTING WEAKNESS OF THE ROYAL PRISONER—THE SECRET PROTEST—DIPLOMATIC TREACHERY OF THE FRENCH KING—DEGRADING CONCESSIONS—DANGEROUS ALTERNATIVE CONCEDED BY CHARLES V.—DECISION OF THE REGENT—CONFERENCE BETWEEN CHARLES AND FRANCIS—BETROTHAL OF FRANCIS TO THE QUEEN OF PORTUGAL—DEPARTURE OF THE FRENCH KING FROM SPAIN—HIS MEETING WITH THE PRINCES—HE IS MET AT BAYONNE BY THE COURT—ARRIVAL OF MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—INDIGNATION OF LOUISE DE SAVOIE—THE KING IS DETAINED IN THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES BY ILL HEALTH—THE IMPERIALIST ENVOYS URGE UPON FRANCIS THE RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY OF MADRID—HIS EVASIVE REPLY—HE RECEIVES AMBASSADORS FROM THE POPE AND THE VENETIAN STATES—COMPLAINS OF THE HARSH MEASURES OF THE EMPEROR—REPLACES THE GENERALS WHO FELL AT PAVIA—ABANDONS HIMSELF ONCE MORE TO DISSIPATION—NEARLY LOSES HIS LIFE FROM A FALL WHILE HUNTING—CONVOKES AN ASSEMBLY OF THE PRINCES AND THE BURGUNDIAN DEPUTIES—THEY REFUSE TO SANCTION THE EXCISION OF THE DUCHY FROM FRANCE—FRANCIS SIGNS A TREATY WITH THE POPE, HENRY VIII, FRANCISCO SFORZA AND THE VENETIANS—THE IMPERIAL ENVOYS WITHDRAW FROM FRANCE—INDIGNATION OF CHARLES V.—HE SUMMONS FRANCIS TO RETURN TO MADRID—FRANCIS DISREGARDS THE APPEAL—HE NEGLECTS TO ASSIST HIS ALLIES—PESCARA REPLACED IN ITALY BY BOURBON—THE IMPERIAL ARMY OPPRESS THE ITALIAN PEOPLE—FRANCIS ENDEAVOURS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE EMPEROR—HIS TRIUMPHANT RECEPTION—LOUISE DE SAVOIE RESOLVES TO SUPPLANT THE COUNTESS DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—THE MAID OF HONOUR—AN APT PUPIL—THE COURT RECEPTION—ANNE DE PISSELEU IS PRESENTED TO THE KING—EFFECTS OF HER APPEARANCE—ALARM OF MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND.

CHAPTER III.

[1526.]

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of his sister, Francis fell back into the same state of discouragement in which she had found him. Charles continued inflexible; and he began to dread that, should he persevere in resisting his demands, he was destined to perpetual imprisonment. Such a prospect was agony to his impatient and restless spirit; and the more he reflected upon abdicating his throne, the more repulsive the idea became. He had, immediately upon drawing up the document entrusted to the princess, desired Messieurs de Montmorenci and de Brion to proceed at once to France, as the attendants of the dauphin; but upon ascertaining that the conferences then pending at Toledo produced no results, and that the emperor resolutely refused to renounce one iota of his claims, he wrote to desire them to return, and to bring with them the edict which subsequent consideration had determined him to cancel.

Had he persisted in his first high-minded and generous purpose, he would have escaped the censure with which he has been justly visited by posterity; have upheld his own honour; and preserved his country from sacrifices

fatal to its greatness. But the besetting sin of Francis had ever been his vanity. He could not brook the concession of his sovereignty even for a season; and in compliance with the dictates of this unmanly weakness, he was induced to exhibit a selfishness baneful alike to his own reputation and to the welfare of his kingdom. On the 19th of December, only a few weeks after he had parted from Madame d'Alençon, he delivered to his plenipotentiaries an order to draw up a treaty in conformity with the will of Charles; and on the 14th of January, when he was hourly expecting to be called upon to sign the treaty, and take the oath to observe its conditions, he summoned them to his presence, together with the lords de Montmorenci, de Boissy, and de Brion, and the several secretaries and notaries who had been employed during the recent conferences; and, after having bound them by an oath to secresy, he explained at length all his causes of complaint against the emperor; declared the document which he was about to sign to be null and void, it having been forced upon him while under restraint; and called upon them to witness that he never meant to fulfil the conditions to which it pledged him.

After having made this dishonourable and degrading compromise with his conscience, Francis unhesitatingly plighted his royal word, and affixed his royal signature to the iniquitous demands of the emperor; an act by which, had they been observed, he reduced the great kingdom over which he had been called to reign, to an insignificance which would have rendered it a mere third-rate European power; for by these he bound himself to cede to Charles the duchy of Burgundy, the county

of Charolais, the lordships of Château-Chinon and Noyers, the viscounty of Auxonne, and the jurisdiction of Saint-Laurent; to renounce the sovereignty of Flanders and Artois; and to withdraw his alliance and protection from the young King of Navarre, the Dukes de Gueldres and Wirtemberg, and Robert de la Mark; thus dismembering his nation, stripping it of some of its finest provinces, and of many of its available resources, and sacrificing several of his most tried and devoted friends.

Nor was even this the full extent of the humiliation to which he was pledged; for it was also stipulated that he should furnish Charles with troops, vessels, and funds to prosecute his design of subjugating Italy; that he should give his sister in marriage to the Duke de Bourbon, who, together with his adherents, was to be fully pardoned, and restored to the possession of all their former territories and property of whatever description within the realm of France; and that he should reinstate, in like manner, the Prince of Orange, whose estates had been confiscated for his adherence to the cause of the emperor; and pay a ransom of two millions of crowns for his own release, as well as the debt due by Charles to England, which amounted to five hundred thousand additional. He was, moreover, to espouse the widowed queen Eleonora of Portugal, and to affiance the dauphin to the infanta her daughter, to whom she was to be united so soon as he had attained a proper age; while, in compensation of this undue and monstrous condescension, which disgraced him equally as a monarch and a man, it was agreed that on the 10th of March next ensuing he was to be escorted to the frontier of his own territories, where he was to

deliver up, in lieu of his own person, his two elder sons as hostages; or, should he prefer it, the dauphin and twelve of the first nobles of France selected by himself, the whole of whom were to remain in the custody of Charles until the pledges he had given were fulfilled. These exacted that Burgundy was to be ceded within six weeks, and the ratifications of the treaty exchanged within four months; or that Francis should return to Spain, to be again imprisoned wheresoever the emperor should see fit; and to accompany him in person on his crusade against the infidels.

In leaving the French king at liberty to retain, and to replace his second son by twelve of his subjects, there is little doubt that Charles calculated upon the womanly weakness of Louise de Savoie, to whom Francis deferred the decision; but he had mistaken the nature of the regent, who, before she would make a definitive reply, demanded to know the names of the nobles who were to act as substitutes for the young prince; when the emperor unblushingly mentioned those of the Duke de Vendôme, the Duke d'Aubigny, the Count de Saint Pol, the Count de Guise, the Maréchal de Lautrec, the Count de Laval, the Marquis de Saluzzo, the Seigneurs de Rieux and de Brézé, the Maréchal de Montmorenci, the Admiral de Brion, and the Maréchal d'Aubigny.

Louise de Savoie did not hesitate for a moment. She saw that by accepting this insidious offer she should deprive the French army of its most able generals; and she accordingly lost no time in setting forth for Bayonne, accompanied by her two grandsons, and attended by a brilliant court.

Meanwhile Charles in his turn proceeded to Madrid, where he had a long conference with Francis; after which, both occupying the same litter, they paid a visit to Queen Eleonora, and the ceremony of betrothal was performed; but, nevertheless, the French king was detained a prisoner in the Alcazar until the 21st of February, when he at length commenced his journey towards his own frontier, under the joint guard of De Lannoy and Alarçon, and escorted by fifty horsemen.

On the 18th of March he reached Fontarabia, and once more saw before him the blue and rapid waves of the Bidassoa, which marked the boundaries of the two kingdoms. In the centre of the river a large barge had been moored, and on the opposite bank he distinguished the Maréchal de Lautrec, with his two sons, also attended by a mounted escort. Boats were in readiness on either shore; and the several parties, each accompanied by eight soldiers, put off at the same moment, and in a few seconds boarded the barge. The greeting of Francis to his children was brief; his gaze was fixed upon the soil of France, and the same embrace combined at once his welcome and his leave-taking to the bewildered princes. In another instant he had sprung into the boat which now awaited himself; and he no sooner touched the shore, than, seizing the bridle-rein of a noble Arab which had been prepared for him, he vaulted into the saddle, and, waving his hand energetically, exclaimed, "Once more I am a king!" In another second he had dashed his spurs into the flanks of his gallant steed, and before a word had been exchanged between himself and Lautrec, he galloped furiously from the spot; nor did he slacken

his speed until he reached St. Jean de Luz, where he made a temporary halt which enabled his escort to join him; and then, with scarcely less rapidity, he pursued his way to Bayonne, where his mother and sister were impatiently expecting him.

To Louise de Savoie the meeting was one of unalloyed delight; but to Marguerite de Valois it was damped by the expatriation of her young and helpless nephews; by the reflection that one of her brother's truest and most tried subjects, the veteran minister de Semblançay, was still wearing away the evening of his life within the gloomy dungeons of the Bastille, without a hope of release save by death, the virulence of the regent having caused the process which she had instituted against him to assume the most threatening aspect; and by the enfeebled state of the king himself; who, even amid the delight and exultation of finding himself once more within the boundaries of his own kingdom, and surrounded by his noblest and most faithful friends, nevertheless unconsciously betrayed the fearful inroads which captivity and suffering had made upon his health.

But there was one individual who, even more than Madame d'Angoulême herself, suffered every memory and every consideration to be swallowed up in the absorbing joy of this new meeting; and that one was the Countess de Châteaubriand, who, having succeeded during her imprisonment under the roof of her husband in gaining over the solitary attendant who had access to her apartment, had been apprised of the release and expected arrival of the king; and had lost no time, through the connivance of this new ally,

in making her escape from Brittany; and thus the court had scarcely reached Bayonne, when, to the great and undisguised displeasure of the regent, it was joined by the only woman whose influence rivalled her own over the mind of her son.

In Marguerite de Valois, however, the fugitive countess found a willing and powerful protector. She was aware how essential the affection of the countess had become to the happiness of her brother; and when she witnessed the delight which beamed in his eyes as he advanced to greet her, she became convinced that without the presence of Madame de Châteaubriand his self-gratulation would have been incomplete.

The shattered state of his health, and the extreme languor by which he was oppressed, induced the physicians of the king to advise him to remain for a time in the southern provinces; a counsel which he willingly followed, the enthusiasm of his subjects, and the public rejoicings consequent upon his return, leaving him no leisure for weariness or desire of change. The envoys of the emperor, who had accompanied him to Bayonne, and who urged upon him the ratification of the treaty which he had signed at Madrid, were briefly and coldly dismissed, with the reply that he could take no further steps until he had obtained the sanction of the States of Burgundy to separate that duchy from the kingdom of France, for which purpose he was about to convoke them; and they had no other alternative than to remain at Bayonne until the assembly should have met.

Francis then hastened to write with his own hand to Henry VIII, to express the gratitude he felt for his refusal

to invade his territories; and to confirm the treaty made between that monarch and the regent, which had been signed at Bordeaux on the 15th of April. He also received with affectionate courtesy the confidential ambassadors of the pope and the Venetian senate, who were sent to congratulate him upon his return to France; and did not hesitate to complain with great bitterness of the harsh and ungenerous treatment he had experienced from the emperor; and to declare to them, when they pressed him to uphold the independence of Italy, and the equilibrium of Europe, that he considered the treaty which he had been compelled to sign at Madrid of none effect, wrung from him as it had been by violence; and that he was not only ready to assist in the restoration of the liberty of the Italian states, but also to make an effort to overthrow the arrogant pretensions of Charles himself. His next step was to replace the brave generals and companions in arms who had fallen at Pavia, and to reward those who still survived; and these arrangements made, he abandoned himself to his favourite pursuits and pleasures with a zest little calculated to restore him to the health he so much needed.

From Bayonne he proceeded with all his court to Bordeaux, and thence to Cognac, where he sustained a fall while hunting by which his life was endangered, and a season of compelled inaction was induced, which enabled him once more to find leisure for more serious and important considerations.

By alleging the necessity of appealing to the States on the subject of Burgundy, Francis had merely sought to gain time, for his disposition was too arbitrary to suffer

him to submit to dictation from his subjects; but in order to silence the emperor by some measure which might bear the semblance of a deference to the national authority, he convoked[1] a meeting of the princes, great nobles, and prelates who were then at court, to whom he introduced de Lannoy, stating the object for which he had followed him from Spain, and calling upon them to decide between himself and the emperor. As he had been aware would be the case, the whole assembly at once disowned his right to dismember the kingdom; and asserted that an oath exacted by a foreign sovereign could not exempt him from the observance and fulfilment of that which he had taken at his coronation. The deputies of the States of Burgundy, who had also been summoned declared, moreover, that they would never consent to yield allegiance to any monarch save that of France, nor to permit their duchy to become a portion of the emperor's territory; and that, even should the king urge them to such a concession, they would resist while they had life.

De Lannoy was too skilful a diplomatist to be duped by so transparent a comedy as this. He felt that his imperial master was foiled with his own weapons; nor was his mortification decreased, even amid the splendid entertainments which Francis affected to give in honour of the emperor's envoys, by the fact that, during his sojourn at Cognac, the French king signed a treaty of alliance with the Pope, Francisco Sforza, the King of England, and the Venetians, which assumed the name of the Holy League. By this treaty the contracting parties

[1] On the 12th of December.

bound themselves to effect the liberation of the French princes, paying a ransom of two million golden crowns for their release; to restore to Francisco Sforza the sovereignty of Milan; and to put the other Italian states into possession of all the rights and immunities which they possessed before the war.

By consenting to enter into this league, Francis, who was at length desirous of peace, deliberately deceived those who had offered to become his allies. The subtle spirit of Louise de Savoie had suggested, and her son had voluntarily adopted, this treacherous policy, in order to intimidate the emperor by the prospect of a war with Italy and England, and thus to induce him to withdraw his opposition to a compromise by which Burgundy would remain an uncontested province of France, and the liberty of the young princes be secured.

So open and avowed a disregard of the claims of his imperial master induced de Lannoy to expostulate warmly with Francis; but as he could obtain no other reply to his reproachful arguments than an assurance that the king was ready to make any pecuniary compensation which the emperor might demand for the non-fulfilment of this condition of the treaty—a compromise which the envoys were not authorized to accept—they had no alternative but at once to withdraw from the city, and return to Spain.

On receiving the intelligence of this false dealing on the part of Francis, Charles exclaimed vehemently; "He need not accuse his subjects of this want of good faith. To prove his own sincerity, he has only to fulfil his pledge, and once more to constitute himself my prisoner. Let him do that, and I will acquit him."

He then removed the dauphin and the Duke d'Orleans from Valladolid, where they had hitherto resided, to Old Castile; refused to accept the compromise offered by the French king; and formally summoned him to perform his promise, and to surrender himself once more a prisoner.

Francis was not, however, likely to reply to such an appeal while surrounded by homage and pleasure; and so completely did he ere long become immersed in his favourite pursuits, that he even neglected to fulfil the pledges which he had given to his new allies; and, instead of furnishing an army for the contemplated campaign, he suffered all considerations of policy to be obliterated by the amusement of the moment.

In this supineness he was not imitated by the emperor, who was no sooner apprised of the death of Pescara, than he despatched the Duke de Bourbon once more to Italy, with a promise that he should succeed to the sovereignty of the Milanese; giving him as his coadjutors the Marquis del Guasto, (who had at the request of his cousin inherited his command,) Ugo da Moncada, and Antonio da Leyva, three brave and able generals who were well worthy of such an association. He did not, however, provide any means of subsistence for the army over which they presided; but with cold-blooded atrocity, authorized the troops to extort all that they required from the unfortunate Italians. The natural consequence ensued; the population, driven to desperation, formed constant conspiracies against the imperial generals, who revenged themselves by increased severity and augmented confiscations; and meanwhile Francisco Sforza began to suffer from famine at Milan, which still

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continued in a state of siege; awaiting in vain the succours which had been promised to him by the French king; who, instead of relieving the necessities of his friends, had recommenced his negotiations with the emperor to induce him to receive an equivalent in specie for the Burgundian duchy; and upon various and puerile pretexts delayed to ratify the treaty of Cognac.

The progress of Francis through his southern provinces was one perpetual triumph; not even as the victor of Marignano had he been so enthusiastically received; and he had not moral courage to tear himself from these new-found delights even to take the steps necessary to ensure their continuance. Absorbed in dissipation and self-indulgence, he left all public affairs in the hands and under the control of his mother, her unprincipled adviser Duprat, and the creatures to whom he had sold the government offices, and who were entirely at his disposal. Even amid the multitudinous cares which thus devolved upon her, however, Louise de Savoie found leisure and opportunity to watch all the movements of the king, and her exasperation was extreme when she became convinced that absence had only served to rivet the chains by which he was bound to Madame de Châteaubriand. She could not forgive the defiance to her will exhibited by the countess, whom she had herself exiled from the court, in thus presenting herself once more before her at the very moment of the king's return, as if in marked contempt of her authority; and her indignation and jealousy were heightened by the reflection that nothing save a conviction of impunity could have led the countess to attempt so dangerous an experiment.

Vainly had she endeavoured to excite the coldness and distrust of Francis towards the beautiful favourite: he only smiled at her inferences, and escaped from her remonstrances; and at length, in despair of effecting her purpose by argument or persuasion, Louise de Savoie, who was unrestrained by any moral consideration, and who had internally vowed the ruin of her victim, resolved to effect it by introducing her son to some new beauty, whose very novelty would give her an advantage over the more matured and familiar charms of Madame de Châteaubriand. In order to find a fitting object for this unworthy purpose, the duchess-mother was not compelled to look beyond her own lovely and licentious circle; and she smiled triumphantly, as she remembered that of all her train the most beautiful girl had not yet, owing to a slight indisposition, been presented to the king.

Madame d'Angoulême had, in the previous year, received into her household as one of her maids of honour, Anne de Pisseleu, the daughter of Guillaume de Pisseleu, Seigneur de Heilly, who had at that period just attained her seventeenth year, and whose extraordinary loveliness was the topic of the whole court. Highly educated, and endowed by nature with a sparkling wit which enhanced her acquired attainments, she had at once become a favourite with her royal mistress, to whose will she affected the most devoted obedience. In Mademoiselle de Heilly, therefore, Louise de Savoie believed that she had all to hope, and nothing to apprehend; for she was already so well acquainted with the coquetry and dissipation of her character, that she did not for an instant fear any opposition on the part of the young lady

herself to a project which held out such brilliant promises of future greatness. She therefore instructed her maid of honour to remain secluded in her apartment until she should herself decide the moment of her presentation to the king; and when the spoiled favourite ventured to inquire the reason of this enforced solitude, Louise de Savoie only answered by a significant smile, and an injunction to be careful of her good looks; and then, in order to escape further interrogation, she left the room.

As she withdrew, Mademoiselle de Heilly remained for a moment lost in thought; after which she approached a large Venetian mirror that stood upon her toilette, and looked into it long and anxiously. A cold proud smile rose to her lips as she turned away. She had already fathomed the meaning of the regent.

When the court reached Mont-de-Marsan, Louise de Savoie once more paid a visit to the fair recluse; when she announced her intention of holding a circle on the following evening, and presented to her *protégée* a parure of costly pearls.

"I believe you to be attached to me, Mademoiselle;" she said, as she passed her fingers caressingly through the long ebon tresses of Anne de Pisseleu, who knelt at her feet to kiss the hand which tendered the costly gift; "nor do I fear that you will ever forget all that you owe to my favour. I look upon you as one who will be devoted to my will through every change of fortune, and governed by my wishes in every emergency, and under all circumstances. To-morrow you will be presented to the king. Be equally obedient and loyal towards my son,"

Eagerly was that morrow anticipated by the fair maid of honour, who had already been too long an inmate of the dissolute court of the regent to be either surprised or startled by the new intrigue in which she was destined to play so prominent a part. She had already seen the rival whom she was tacitly called upon to supplant; and as she remembered her pale pure face, shaded by masses of bright auburn hair, her soft grey eyes, and well rounded but somewhat diminutive figure, she contemplated with secret exultation her own large and languishing black eyes, the clouds of rich ebon ringlets that fell about her brow and shoulders, the graceful proportions of her finely developed figure, and the fascination of her smile; until she began to feel that her success was certain, and to weave a web of dazzling and daring fancies which at once blinded her to the infamy by which they were to be purchased, and might have served to arrest the purpose of Madame d'Angoulême, had she been enabled to fathom the mysteries of that heart which she believed to be wholly absorbed by vanity and pleasure.

After a day devoted to hunting, and an hour given to the imperious demands of public business, Francis proceeded to the apartments of his mother, which were brilliantly illuminated, and already crowded with courtiers of both sexes. Louise de Savoie occupied a raised seat beneath a canopy at the upper end of the principal saloon; and on her left hand sat Marguerite de Valois, having immediately behind her the Countess de Châteaubriand, whose soft and childlike loveliness formed a marked contrast to the noble and proud beauty of her royal friend. The resemblance

borne by the Duchess d'Alençon to her brother was remarkable. The same piercing and imperious grey eyes, the same abundance of rich dark hair upon which the king had prided himself before the accident which induced him to wear it closely cut, the same finely formed but somewhat too salient nose, the same full firm mouth, and the same lofty figure and bearing were discernible in each; but the general harshness of the king's expression was tempered into softness by the urbane and affectionate nature of the duchess. Behind the coffer, draped with crimson damask, which was occupied by the regent, stood Madame de Brancas, the comptroller of the household, the Duchess d'Usez, and the other ladies in waiting; while on her right was placed, a step higher than her own, a similar seat for the king; upon whose entrance Madame de Brancas advanced to the front of the duchess-mother, in order to introduce such of the guests as were not members of the court, or who had from any cause been absent for a time from the royal circle, when it should be the pleasure of the regent to receive their salutations.

In the train of Francis were assembled Montmorenci, whom he had just appointed grand-master, maréchal, and governor of Languedoc; de Brion Chabot, newly created admiral and governor of Burgundy; Téodoro Trivulzio, and Fleuranges, who had both obtained the bâton of maréchal; Saint-Pol, the new governor of Dauphiny; and Brézé, upon whom had been conferred the government of Normandy; all of whom were to be formally and for the first time presented to the ex-regent by their present titles. Gay and gorgeous was

the group; and it is questionable whether any who looked at that moment upon the individuals of whom it was composed, had either leisure or inclination to reflect that the king had replaced the old and tried generals whom he had lost at Pavia by a bevy of court favourites.

Francis advanced to the daïs, where having saluted his mother, he bowed slightly in acknowledgment of the profound curtsey of Madame de Brancas, and then, in order not to impede the presentations, moved forward to the seat of Madame d'Alençon, where he continued in conversation with herself and the Countess de Châteaubriand until all the nobles had passed the duchess; after which, still trailing the white plumes of his hat along the tapestried floor, he returned to the side of his mother, and took possession of the seat which had been provided for him.

The white wand of Madame de Brancas quivered in her hand, as she severally presented the wives of the civic functionaries, whom, in consideration of the loyal reception which had been given to her son, the duchess-mother had admitted to her circle. The dignity of the comptroller of the household suffered under this enforced duty; and although the courtesy of Francis compelled him to welcome each as she approached with that winning condescension which secured the hearts of all to whom it was extended, it was evident that he was weary of the ceremony; when as the last of the provincial ladies retired, proud and happy, to the lower end of the hall, the voice of the stately female official became suddenly sonorous, her wand steady, and her whole attitude dignified and calm.

"La Demoiselle de Heilly, Madame." And Anne de Pisseleu advanced towards the daïs. As she came forward with a slow but firm step, her eye never wandered from the face of her royal mistress. Her robe of crimson damask, richly embroidered with gold, fell about her in folds which might have draped a Grecian statue; her dark hair was braided with pearls, and her neck and arms were adorned with the same costly gems. With dignified yet modest grace she bent her knee; and as Louise de Savoie extended her hand to raise her, she turned one look upon her son.

That look told her that she had triumphed.

"The poor child has been long ill;" said Louise de Savoie, as if to account for her sudden appearance. "Mademoiselle, the king will receive your homage."

Instinctively Francis rose, not as before slowly and languidly, but with an expression of interest and pleasure so visible as to bring a glow to the cheek of his sister, and tears into the eyes of Madame de Châteaubriand. He even suffered Mademoiselle de Heilly to kneel for an instant before he recovered sufficient self-possession to raise her; and as he at length did so, he said in an unsteady voice—

"Be careful of your health, Mademoiselle; it is too precious to be neglected. The court of Madame can ill afford the absence of its brightest ornament."

Mademoiselle de Heilly again curtsied profoundly; after which she withdrew behind the seat of the regent, whence she did not move for the remainder of the evening. She could not have occupied a position better calculated to enhance her extraordinary beauty; for as

she occasionally bent down to reply to a few kind words addressed to her by her royal mistress, and her young and blooming countenance came into close contact with the still fine but rapidly fading face of Louise de Savoie, the contrast was striking.

The king, at the termination of the presentations, traversed the apartment, courteously addressing the local functionaries, and arranging with his favourite courtiers the pursuits of the following day; but it was evident to all about him that his thoughts frequently wandered; and he no sooner found himself at liberty to yield to his own inclination without a breach of that court etiquette of which he was so punctiliously observant, than he returned to the immediate circle of his mother; first, however, approaching his sister, with whom, as well as with her friend, he entered into an animated conversation, which once more brought back a bloom to the cheeks of the countess. He nevertheless eagerly obeyed the summons of Madame d'Angoulême, who ere long recalled him to her side; where, although he listened deferentially to some communication which she made to him, his eyes were constantly fixed upon the beautiful maid of honour.

"I am lost;" murmured the countess, as she anxiously watched the expression of the king's countenance.

"Take courage;" whispered Marguerite in reply; "this is, believe me, a mere passing fancy; and you are well aware that my royal brother has never been distinguished for his constancy. Anne de Pisseleu is undoubtedly very attractive; but she is still a mere girl,

who will feel rather terrified than flattered by such undisguised admiration."

"She displays no fear;" sighed Madame de Châteaubriand.

"True;" persisted the princess; "but neither does she exhibit any exultation. She is as calm and as expressionless as a statue. You have claims upon the king which he will not overlook. Maintain your self-command, and rest assured that you are safe."

And, even knowing what she did of the habits and temperament of Francis, Madame d'Alençon had faith in her own words.

CHAPTER IV.

[1526-27.]

THE ITALIAN LEAGUE IS PARALYSED—ALARM OF THE POPE—THE POPE ENTERS INTO A LEAGUE WITH POMPEIO COLONNA—COLONNA MARCHES ON ROME—THE PONTIFF TAKES REFUGE IN THE CASTLE OF ST. ANGELO—CLEMENT VII. CAPITULATES—FRANCIS IS SUSPECTED BY THE ITALIAN STATES—IS JUSTIFIED BY THE NATIONAL POVERTY—BOURBON MARCHES TO MILAN AS THE LIEUTENANT OF THE EMPEROR—DESPAIR OF THE MILANESE—THE VOW OF BOURBON—MISTAKEN TRUST—BOURBON MARCHES ON ROME—DEATH OF BOURBON—THE SACK OF THE ETERNAL CITY—ALARM OF CHRISTIAN EUROPE—FRANCIS VISITS THE CAPITAL—THE CHANCELLOR-PRIEST—A PARLIAMENTARY MISTAKE—INJUSTICE OF FRANCIS—TRIAL OF DE SEMBLANÇAY—THE DUCHESS D'USEZ—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE COURT AND THE CAPITAL—CHAMBORD—ROYAL FESTIVITIES—THE COURT BEAUTIES—DISORDERLY STATE OF THE METROPOLIS—INFLUENCE OF THE ASTROLOGERS—CORNELIUS AGRIPPA AND HIS ROYAL PATRONESS—THE COLLEGE OF THE SORBONNE—GUILLAUME BUCHARDT—THE SANCTUARY—FRANCIS SENDS ENVOYS TO SPAIN—WOLSEY VISITS FRANCE—THE HAND OF MARGUERITE DE VALOIS IS DEMANDED FOR HENRY VIII.—THE PRINCESS DECLINES THE MARRIAGE—FRANCIS REFUSES TO BESTOW HIS SISTER-IN-LAW ON THE ENGLISH KING—WOLSEY RETURNS TO ENGLAND—CHARLES V. DISCLAIMS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SIEGE OF ROME—THE KINGS OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE DESPATCH A COMBINED ARMY TO ITALY UNDER THE COMMAND OF LAUTREC.

CHAPTER IV.

[1526-27.]

THE Italian league was paralysed by the supineness of the French king. The Swiss levies which were to have been raised by the pope and the Venetians did not arrive, and the Duke d'Urbino, the general-in-chief, refused to attack the Spanish army without their aid; while the pontiff, who possessed neither energy nor talent sufficient for the emergency in which he found himself, was alternately giving way to his resentments, and yielding to the terror inspired by the consequences of his own imprudence. Distrustful of his new allies, and without confidence even in his troops, he gave contradictory orders, which harassed those under his control without advancing his interests; and at length, anxious to secure himself in peace in his capital, he offered terms to the Colonna family, who were his declared and inveterate enemies, and was even short-sighted enough to enter into a treaty with them, and to disband his forces in Romagna; an error of which the Cardinal Pompeio Colonna[1] instantly took advantage, by arming all his

[1] Pompeio Colonna, Bishop of Rieti, was created cardinal by Leo X, but was deprived of all his ecclesiastical revenues by Clement VII, who, however, restored them when Colonna saved his life at the sack of Rome, and made him legate at Ancona. He subsequently became viceroy of Naples, and died in 1532, at the age of fifty-three years.

feudatories and dependents, and marching so rapidly and impetuously upon Rome, that the pope was compelled to shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo; while the cardinal, at the head of eight thousand men, passed the gates of the city, pillaged the Vatican and St. Peter's, and besieged the pontiff in the citadel. Thus pressed, Clement VII. found himself under the necessity of suing for peace; and through the mediation of Ugo de Moncada, Colonna consented to withdraw his troops from Rome on condition that the pontiff should afford no aid, either directly or indirectly, to the league, for the space of four months.

The prolonged inaction of Francis at length excited the suspicion of the Italian states; and the court of Rome in consequence despatched to France one of their most able diplomatists, who was instructed to exert himself to the utmost to discover if any intrigue hostile to their interests were cloaked beneath this apparent indifference; and with authority, should such prove to be the case, to offer certain concessions, in order to induce the French cabinet at once to make some demonstration in their favour. Guan Baptista Sanga, the envoy in question, soon discovered, however, that little penetration was required to unravel the seeming mystery, for that the nation was almost bankrupt; while the revenues, collected tardily and with difficulty, were forthwith swallowed up by the exigencies of the court. He consequently assured his government that they need fear no aggression from France; for that even were the duchy of Milan freely tendered to the king at that moment, it would be declined, however the secret wishes of Francis might lean

to its possession; the duchess-mother, the chancellor, and the council being resolved against it, and the monarch himself so absorbed by pleasure as to be careless of higher interests.

Aware that there was nothing to fear from the ambition of France, Sanga urged upon the ministers the expediency of redeeming the pledge given by their monarch; and at length it was resolved that a fleet, consisting of four galleons and sixteen barks, which was then arming at Marseilles, should proceed to Genoa under the command of Pietro da Navarro, who, having been abandoned by Ferdinand of Aragon when he was made prisoner by the French, had offered his services to Francis, by whom they were at once joyfully received, and justly appreciated.

Navarro consequently sailed without further delay; and, on the 29th of August, joined the combined fleets of the pope and the Venetians; while at the same time a small force was despatched to Milan to the relief of Fernando Sforza, under the Marquis de Saluzzo; but, as we have already shown, the expedition had been too long delayed. Bourbon had landed in Italy, and with the main body of the imperial army had marched to Milan. When he entered the persecuted city the duke was met on all sides by misery and expostulation. Deputations of the magistrates and of the most respectable citizens waited upon him with complaints of the extortion and persecution to which they were subjected by the emperor's troops, whose rapacity and licentiousness, long unchecked by their superior officers, had reduced the inhabitants of the city to absolute despair; and assured

him that their homes were invaded, their hearths polluted, and their very lives in danger.

Bourbon listened courteously and patiently to these representations, admitting that he saw on every side sufficient evidence of the correctness of their statements; but he confessed himself unable to curb the excesses of the troops by any other means than an immediate distribution of their arrears of pay, which he advised the inhabitants to raise, if possible, among themselves; declaring that they should no sooner have done so than he would evacuate the city, and encamp his whole army beyond the walls.

To this proposal, however, the already impoverished citizens demurred. They had no guarantee that after making this new concession the duke would perform his promise; and they had already suffered so severely from the bad faith of the invading generals that experience had rendered them cautious. Their hesitation irritated Bourbon, who at once divined its cause; and as they were about to retire, he said vehemently:—"Consider your own interests, Gentlemen. As matters stand I am unable to secure you from pillage and even from personal violence. By withdrawing the troops I shall effect this easily, and you will do well to trust me. I know that other pledges have been given to you which have been broken; but as for myself, I call God to witness that if I fail in performing my promise, I wish that the first shot that is fired at the next battle in which I am engaged may end my life."

After so solemn a protestation as this the Milanese authorities hesitated no longer. With extreme difficulty

they succeeded in raising thirty thousand ducats, which they delivered to the duke; but once more they saw themselves duped by the invading army. The troops still continued to occupy the city; and at length committed such fearful enormities that many of the burghers, driven to desperation, committed suicide in order to terminate their sufferings.

At this period the emperor might with ease have subdued the whole of Italy, had he been in a position to satisfy the demands of his army; the Duke d'Urbino still persisting in his resolution to avoid all contact with the imperialist army until strongly reinforced; but the want of funds to pay his troops rendered Charles unable to profit by the opportunity, while the lax state of discipline to which they were reduced gave him little confidence in their fidelity. Bourbon, however, whose whole prospects were involved in the success of the war, did not suffer himself to be disheartened by such considerations. He was aware that he possessed the affections of the soldiery, and he resolved not to yield an inch of the territory that he had won.

The arrival of Frundsberg, a German adventurer, who had already done good service at Pavia, and who ultimately joined him with a strong body of lansquenets which he had raised at his own expense, in order to share in the profits which must, as he was well aware, accrue to the victors in the struggle, soon determined him, moreover, to resume the offensive; and as he could no longer promise the troops that their arrears would be supplied by the emperor, he at once inflamed their

cupidity by proposing to them no less an enterprise than the conquest of Rome, the plunder of which treasure-teeming city would secure to them not only help but affluence. The hatred of Frundsberg and his Germans alike to the person and to the faith of the pontiff secured their hearty co-operation in the project; and accordingly the imperialists, having wrung from the unhappy inhabitants of Milan their few remaining ducats, proceeded to Placenza, where, however, on the 17th of March, Frundsberg was struck by apoplexy, and Bourbon accordingly assumed the command of their joint armies. Destitute alike of money and provisions, the host moved forward, plundering churches and villages, and spreading terror upon their path, until on the 5th of May they halted beneath the walls of the Eternal City; and on the following morning Bourbon, whose armour was covered by a surcoat of cloth of silver, himself raised a scaling-ladder, and calling upon his men to follow him, prepared to lead the assault.

Scarcely, however, had he reached the third round of the ladder when the fate which he had himself evoked at Milan overtook him. The ball of a retreating sentinel, who, scared by the unexpected attack, was hurriedly abandoning his post in order to give the alarm, struck him on the breast, and he at once became convinced that the wound was mortal. When he fell he was surrounded by several of his most tried and faithful friends; and by a last effort he conjured them to throw a cloak over his body, and to draw it aside, in order that the troops might not be induced, by the knowledge of his death, to abandon their enterprise. His request was

complied with, and as they removed him from the fatal spot, he breathed his last. The command of the imperial army devolved by his demise upon Philibert de Chalons, Prince of Orange, whose proffered services, as we have already stated, had been coldly accepted by Francis, and who had in consequence transferred them to the emperor, in order, if possible, to revenge upon the French king the mortification which he had experienced at his hands.

Under his guidance, therefore, the eager army, unconscious of the loss which they had sustained, pressed on, incited alike by vengeance and cupidity; and, after a brief but bloody struggle, succeeded in rendering themselves masters of the doomed city; and then commenced the frightful sack of Rome, which has furnished one of the darkest pages in the history of the civilized world, during which nothing remained sacred in the eyes of the invaders; while the pope and a body of the cardinals, who had succeeded in effecting their escape to the castle of St. Angelo, were at length compelled, after enduring for an entire month all the horrors of daily increasing starvation, to capitulate with the Prince of Orange; who ultimately took possession, not only of the fortress, but also of the persons of the pontiff himself, and of thirteen of the conclave, whom he retained prisoners until the pleasure of the emperor as to their ultimate disposal should be declared.

The fall of Rome occasioned general consternation throughout Europe, and sufficed to arouse even Francis to a sense of the impolicy and bad faith of his own want of energy, which had in a great degree conduced to this terrible catastrophe. He could not forget that it was by

his persuasion the pope had consented to a war with Charles which he had previously been anxious to avoid, and that he had been beguiled into joining the league by promises which had never been fulfilled. Instead of a powerful army, the French king had supplied only an unimportant body of men, who had, moreover, remained totally inactive; and he had asserted that England would co-operate with him, while Henry VIII. had in point of fact remained passive. In short, he had falsified every promise; and he now beheld with consternation the success of a rival whom he had hitherto hated rather than feared.

An entire year had been consumed in the southern provinces, where, regardless of all save his own personal gratification, Francis had permitted no public cares to interfere with his career of lavish dissipation; but at the termination of that period the increasing discontent of the nation, weary of the arrogant and oppressive rule of the duchess-mother and her ministers, rendered it imperative that he should visit the capital. The death of the wife of Duprat had induced the rapacious chancellor immediately to enter into holy orders, with a view to high and speedy ecclesiastical preferment; and his prescience had been rapidly rewarded by the archbishopric of Sens; but as by the demise of Etienne Poncher, the late prelate, the rich abbey of Saint Benoit had also become vacant, he determined to be at the same time his successor in that government. Herein, however, he was met by the objection that the abbot must, according to an article of the *concordat*, be elected by the community themselves, and by the declaration that they had already conferred the dignity upon François Poncher, Bishop of Paris.

Enraged by this opposition to his will, Duprat, undeterred by any sense of justice, or any dread of punishment, took forcible possession of the abbey, and imprisoned such of the monks as protested against his usurpation; when the parliament, indignant at so flagrant a disregard of judicial authority, opposed his pretensions. But he found a powerful protector in Louise de Savoie, who represented their interference to her son as an encroachment on his own privileges; and Francis, always jealously alive to any invasion of his authority, at once resolved to hold a bed of justice, at which all the great officers of the crown, presidents, councillors, and other authorities, were summoned to attend; and where the chancellor informed the parliament that they were at liberty to make such representations to the king as they might deem fitting.

Thus challenged, the first president, in the name of the whole court, complained of the usurpation of the chancellor in the matter of the abbey of Saint Benoit; declaring it to be a violation of the law, and praying for its restitution to the elected abbot; but the eloquent spokesman, unfortunately infected by the atmosphere of the court, concluded his remonstrance by an admission that "it would be a species of sacrilege to question the royal power, as the parliament were aware that the king himself was above the law, and could in all things act as he saw fit; while they were equally convinced that he would be guided only by equity and justice."

This ill-timed and unguarded concession secured the triumph of the chancellor; and in the course of the same day the king published an edict by which he

forbade the parliament thenceforward to interfere in any matters of state, or of ecclesiastical preferment; and declared their decrees upon all subjects save those which were purely judicial to be null and void. He likewise denounced their efforts to limit the power which he had transferred to his mother, as well as that which he had entrusted to the chancellor; and concluded by proclaiming that save himself none had authority above that of the minister, and their opposition to his will was consequently of none effect, being merely that of private individuals, who possessed no right of control over his actions.

Nor was this the only demonstration of injustice by which Francis signalized his return to his capital. Louise de Savoie, the friend and mistress of Mademôiselle de Heilly who was rapidly undermining the influence of the Countess de Châteaubriand, had obtained, through her immoral and degrading encouragement of the licentiousness of her son, so perfect an empire over his mind, that he had altogether ceased to oppose her will; and she therefore seized so favourable a moment, to gratify her still undiminished hatred of the unfortunate De Semblançay. Aided by Duprat, who was ever ready to repay her good offices in kind, she urged upon the king the propriety of terminating the long captivity of the unfortunate finance-minister by a trial, which must either decide his innocence and restore him to liberty, or, in the event of his guilt, terminate an existence sullied by crimes worthy of an ignominious death.

Anxious as he was to conform to her wishes in all things, Francis nevertheless hesitated for a time to comply with this suggestion. He remembered the long

and faithful services of the veteran statesman, whom he had been accustomed to call "his father;" he recalled his boyish years, during which the unhappy old man was ever ready alike with assistance and advice; and he even expressed doubts of his delinquency: but Louise de Savoie was not to be so silenced. She represented that if the king, who had been principally injured by the rapacity and peculations of the accused, believed him to be innocent of the charges preferred against him, it was probable that his judges would prove equally lenient, when he would be free to retire, and die in peace upon one of his own estates; whereas he was at present a captive in his old age, and suffering all the penalty of crime; and this argument decided Francis, who, glad of any pretext to escape from a subject which wearied him, at length consented that the victim should be put upon his trial.

Accordingly a court was convened, composed of the creatures of Duprat; De Semblançay was confronted with his accusers; the judicial forms were scrupulously observed; and after the accusations had been read, he was called upon for his defence. Aged, heart-broken, and moreover convinced that his fate was already decided, the prison-worn old man was not even yet utterly subdued; and the energetic indignation with which he repelled the charges that were brought against him, might have carried conviction to the coldest heart. His eloquence, however, availed nothing against the known will of his vindictive enemy; and on the 9th of August the zealous and devoted servant of four successive monarchs, the upright minister, and the honest, uncom-

promising victim of a base revenge, was hanged at Montfaucon, in his sixty-second year, like a common felon.

Anxious to divert the mind of the king from dwelling upon a catastrophe which he might by an effort of moral courage and good feeling have averted, Louise de Savoie, on the evening of the execution, held a circle in her villa of the Tuilleries, where Francis, in the society of Mademoiselle de Heilly, and the other beauties of his mother's court, soon recovered his gaiety. As he traversed the glittering bevy, he paused to converse with the young and witty Duchess d'Usez; and animated by her sparkling gaiety, he addressed her more than once as "my child," in order not to check, by a more ceremonious appellation, the flow of her vivacity. Nothing, however, could long detain him from the side of the new favourite, and he ere long made his way to the immediate circle of his mother; while the young duchess no sooner saw herself at liberty to change her seat than she retreated to a corner of the saloon, where burying her face in her hands, she appeared to have become a prey to the most violent grief.

For a time this extraordinary display of emotion passed unobserved; but at length it attracted the attention of her companions, who eagerly inquired the cause of her emotion.

"Alas, alas!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands; "well may I weep. The king has just left me; and during our conversation he three distinct times called me his 'child.' I am afraid of sharing the fate of M. de Semblançay, for you may remember that he always called him his 'father;' and as the relationship is equally

close, I am dreading that ere long I shall also be hanged at Montfaucon."

This exclamation, and the tragi-comic voice in which it was uttered, elicited a peal of laughter which even the etiquette of a court could not suppress. The curiosity of both the king and his mother was excited, and they demanded to know the cause of this sudden mirth, which, with some hesitation, was declared to them. Francis joined in the general hilarity; but Madame d'Angoulême, whose conscience was less at ease, commanded the adventurous young duchess to retire to her own apartment; and accompanied the order by a reprimand which effectually checked her merriment.

The state of the court and that of the capital presented at this period a contrast alike great and deplorable. Before his departure for Italy, the king had examined and approved the plan laid before him for rebuilding the palace of Chambord, and despite the general poverty of the nation, the duchess-mother had so energetically carried out his views that considerable progress had been made before his return. The celebrated Primaticcio,[1] whose splendid works in stucco for the castle of T. in Mantua, had rendered his name famous throughout the continent, had been summoned to France in order to

[1] Francisco Primaticcio was born at Bologna, in 1490, and was of noble family. He was the pupil of Innocenzia da Imola, and of Bagna Cavallo, or Ramenghi. In 1540, Francis I. bestowed on him the abbey of Saint Martin de Troyes, and commissioned him to execute, on his return to Italy, a hundred and twenty-five statues and busts in bronze for the palace of Fontainbleau, which was also profusely adorned by his paintings. Appointed controller of the crown buildings by Henry II, and commissary-general of the national edifices by his successor Francis II, he died alike wealthy and honoured, in the year 1570.

superintend the construction of the new edifice, as it was the ambition of Francis to render it more rich and splendid than any of the regal residences of Italy, a design in which he was ably seconded by the magnificence of his architect; immense sums were wrung from the necessities of the people, and placed at the disposal of the artist; and eighteen hundred workmen were engaged for the space of twelve years, before the building had attained to the degree of perfection which it ultimately reached.

Nothing could exceed the gratification of the king as he once more wandered through the woods of his favourite retreat, and contemplated the gorgeous residence which even at this early period gave splendid promise of its eventual magnificence. The ancient castle of the counts of Blois had totally disappeared; the contracted courts, enclosed by dense and gloomy fortifications bristling with cannon, had been swept away; and the majestic palace now stood in the midst of a park of twelve thousand acres, with a noble chase abounding in deer and wild-boar, and surrounded by a wall nearly eight leagues in extent; while the river Cosson meandered through banks of the richest grass, or flowed through groups of forest timber, until it ultimately laved the foundations of the edifice which was reflected on its pellucid current as on the surface of a glittering mirror. Within, the combined talents of Jean Goujon[1] and Pierre Bontems had enriched its saloons and galleries

[1] Jean Goujon, one of the most famous sculptors and architects of France, was a Parisian by birth, and was regarded as the restorer of the art, and honoured by the appellation of the Correggio of sculpture, from the extreme gracefulness and delicacy of his productions. His most celebrated work was the *Hunting Diana*, so long the treasured ornament of Malmaison. It was Goujon who constructed

with the most delicate productions of the sculptor's art; while the gorgeous and graceful frescoes of Leonardo da Vinci and Jean Cousin[1] adorned the vestibules and corridors.

Thus, although still unfinished, the palace of Chambord offered many attractions to the king; who forthwith withdrew from the capital, and commenced a series of fêtes at his favourite residence, by which he soon became so thoroughly absorbed, as to forget for a time alike the captivity of the pope, and the watchful enmity of the emperor. Tourneys, carousals, hunting parties, balls, and banquets, succeeded each other in endless variety; but while Francis still affected to regard Madame de Châteaubriand as the presiding deity, it soon became

the Fountaine des Innocents; while the principal number of the fine bas-reliefs of the Louvre and the Hôtel de Carnavalet, also emanated from his chisel. He was still engaged upon one of the former, when he was shot on the 24th of August, 1572, at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, his religion having caused his genius to be disregarded.

[1] Jean Cousin was an artist of extraordinary versatility, being at once a painter, a sculptor, an architect, an engraver, and an anatomist. He was born at Soucy, near Sens, in the year 1530, and became so celebrated as to acquire the title of the Michael Angelo of France. His finest work of sculpture was the mausoleum of the Admiral de Chabot; but it was to his paintings upon glass that he was principally indebted for his fame. In this delicate and difficult branch of art he excelled; all the costly windows of the chapel of Vincennes were his work; and those of the castle of Anet, executed entirely in grey and white; as well as a full-length figure of Francis I, remarkable for the extreme gorgeousness of its colouring. It was Cousin who produced the first oil-painting ever executed by a French artist; a large tableau representing the *Last Judgment*, to which he, in all probability, owed his *sobriquet*. He died in 1589, leaving behind him a *Treatise on the Proportions of the Human Body*, highly esteemed by artists.

not only apparent to herself, but also to those by whom she was surrounded, that her star was rapidly paling before the influence of the beautiful and artful Mademoiselle de Heilly.

Few, however, cared to sadden their own enjoyment by regrets for the fallen favourite; the tide of time seemed to all beside herself to flow over golden sands. The wit of Marguerite de Valois—the superb beauty of Diana de Poitiers—who, on the return of the king had hastened to accept a situation in the household of the duchess-mother which necessitated her constant presence at court, and thus enabled her to exchange the grim glories of Anet, and the paternal tenderness of her aged husband, for the gilded pomp of Chambord, and the flatteries of a young and gallant monarch—the growing influence of the fascinating Anne de Pisseleu—all combined to throw the timid and silent sorrows of Madame de Châteaubriand into the shade. None had leisure or inclination to remember how recently they had coveted her smiles. The nature of a courtier resembles that of the heliotrope; while the sun shines brightly it expands, and embalms the space about it; but at the first appearance of a cloud it closes upon itself, and no longer develops either perfume or beauty.

Such, then, was the state of the court; all public business still remained in the hands of Louise de Savoie and her myrmidons, while the voice of passion and of pleasure was alone suffered to intrude upon the ears of her son. But meanwhile the capital of the kingdom had become the very hot-bed of discontent, licentiousness, and misrule.

The prolonged absence of the king, and the capricious, grasping, and tyrannical government of the

duchess-mother had rendered the citizens desperate. Well aware that they were impoverished to support the profligacy of a court which was not even held in the capital, they became reckless and violent. The narrow, unpaved, and unlighted streets were nightly the scene of rapine, violence, and even murder. The *guet*, or night-watch, composed of timid and indolent burghers, for the most part unarmed from the dread which they entertained of bearing weapons in whose use they were inexperienced, were constantly beaten from their posts by the rabble of the city, and the bands of disorderly students who prowled through the obscure lanes and alleys in pursuit of mischief, even attacking the royal musqueteers, and committing the most atrocious acts of violence upon the courtiers and their adherents, whenever an opportunity presented itself to indulge in such aggressions.

All, in short, was anarchy throughout Paris; the students of the Pré-aux-Clercs were linked with the vilest ruffians in a close community of evil, which had spread like a leprosy; and these students were of themselves sufficient to destroy the safety and tranquillity of the city. While the nobility, during their brief sojourn in the metropolis, confined themselves to excursions in the forest of Saint Gervais, or the environs of Romainville, their affected disgust, but actual apprehension, abandoned to the lawless scholars all the vast meadows which then covered the left bank of the Seine from the old street of Saint Jacques to the walls of the convent of Saint Germain; while the vagabonds and outlaws who formed at that period so considerable a portion of the population, had, by an extraordinary caprice for which it

appears impossible to account, selected as the scene of their orgies the frightful neighbourhood of Montfaucon, where they danced, feasted, and drank under the shadow of the gallows, which was seldom free from its ghastly freight; and beneath this fearful evidence of judicial authority and human justice the most licentious and wanton excesses were of nightly recurrence.

Nor was the one great link between these three several grades of society less to be reprehended than the unhallowed use which each made of its especial prerogative; for that universal bond was created by a set of fanatical charlatans and impostors, who assuming to themselves the character of alchymists and astrologers, penetrated alike into the velvet-draped saloons of palaces, and the mud-walled hovels of the squalid children of poverty and vice. In the present day it is scarcely possible to induce a belief of the mysterious and frequently pernicious influence exercised by these impostors; who while outwardly affecting to be absorbed in the occult labours of their calling, were in fact the vendors of poisons and other deleterious drugs, by which human life was constantly perilled, and human caution as perpetually rendered useless.

Even Louise de Savoie herself, whose strength of character and firmness of will might have been supposed to exempt her from all such puerile superstitions, took into her service the celebrated Cornelius Agrippa; who, much as he detested the arrogant and imperious duchess, consented to join her household in the double capacity of physician and astrologer, although he soon betrayed that the motive by which he had been influenced

was wholly unconnected with the liberal salary that he received; for when consulted as to the fate of the Duke de Bourbon, on his first admission to her presence, he gratified his secret animosity to his royal mistress by prophesying the success of the duke in all his undertakings, and his signal triumph over his enemies; an indiscretion which so exasperated the regent that he was summarily dismissed, deprived of his pension, and forbidden the court; for which severity he revenged himself by the publication of a bitter satire, wherein he likened his late patroness to Jezebel, and drew so forcible a parallel between the two individuals that he was compelled to save his life by a speedy flight from the French territories. Suffice it that crime, imposture, and wretchedness had reached their acme in the metropolis of France; and that the very seats of learning and science were polluted by the ignorance and superstition of those by whom they were tenanted.

Nor was even the ancient college of the Sorbonne exempted from the general degradation; for at the period of which we write, this dwelling of the most erudite doctors of the University, and the members of the *Chambre Ardente*, whose duties consisted in trying all cases of alleged magic and sorcery, rather resembled a fortress than the abode of men of letters. It was, in fact, a species of vast and sombre stronghold, defended by ditches, ramparts, towers, bridges, and all the accessories of a place of war; while its occupants were more than suspected of illegal and mysterious practices which required all the protection external circumstances could afford. The spies of the Sorbonne invaded, unsuspected,

every hearth throughout the capital, and influenced every popular movement; nor did even the government escape their machinations. The celebrated syndic Noël Bédier, a man as unprincipled as he was talented, had attained to such supremacy over the spirits of the people that he had become the actual sovereign of the capital, and by his ability in exciting the passions of the mob, had made himself feared not only by the magistrature, but even by the king himself. Alike unscrupulous and ambitious, he did not suffer himself to be deterred from any object by considerations either of law, loyalty, or justice; but whenever his claims were disallowed, or his demands resisted by the authorities, at once armed the students and led them to the Palace of the Tournelles, to compel by force the concessions which had been refused to his arguments.

This measure, bold and presumptuous as it was, seldom failed to prove successful; for not even the disciplined troops of Francis could make head against so formidable a band of opponents as that with whom, upon such occasions, the turbulent syndic deluged the streets of the capital. Not only were the sturdy and discontented scholars ever ready to obey his bidding, and prepared to second him in every act of violence, but they had secured as their auxiliaries all that houseless, lawless, and vagabond class of the population recognised under the general name of *maltôtiers*, the very refuse and scum of an ill-organized and licentious capital, and which consisted of thieves, emancipated felons, discharged soldiers, foreign adventurers, and other rabble, whose means of existence depended entirely upon their wits.

With these outcasts the grand master had established a perfect understanding by signals and watchwords known only to themselves; and the horns of the students no sooner sounded behind the old walls of the Sorbonne than they were answered by a shrill cry from the depths of the Cour des Miracles, the rendezvous of these vagrants, and a general rush was made towards the gloomy pile whose tenants they were thus called upon to assist or to defend. No principal gate gave entrance to the college, but numerous small doors had been constructed on each of its sides, which were constantly watched from within, in order that immediate ingress might be secured by any of the students who when hotly pressed by the archers of the guard found it desirable to effect a retreat; or by some guilty ally of the indulgent university who sought an asylum against justice. Once within the walls, no criminal could be seized, even by order of the king himself, the power and privileges which had been accorded to the institution placing it beyond royal jurisdiction; and in every case the delays created by the syndic ensuring the escape of the culprit.

Such was the condition of Paris; shunned by the proud and the wealthy, groaning under a heavy weight of taxation which crushed its citizens to the earth, and delivered over nightly to the saturnalia of a host of reckless and desperate ruffians, who acknowledged no law save their own will, and no authority save that of their elected chief. And yet Francis I. slumbered at his post; he disdained to measure his strength with a rabble who, in the hope of largess, shouted and cried *Noël* as he traversed the city streets; he refused to hearken to the

remonstrances of his burghers, whose industry and enterprise could alone have restored the prosperity of the capital; and he resolutely pursued his headlong career of pleasure and profusion with a mine ever ready to spring beneath his feet.

Soon, however, he was compelled by the general indignation felt throughout Europe at the continued captivity of the pope, to arouse himself from the dream of selfish indulgence to which he had yielded, and to send envoys to Spain, as Henry VIII. was also preparing to do, to negotiate for the liberation of the pontiff, and to demand an explanation of the emperor's intentions relative to the sacred person of his prisoner.

The two monarchs had long been engaged in a treaty for the marriage of Francis with the Princess Mary of England, the French king being anxious to evade the alliance of the Dowager-Queen of Portugal; and as the increased and increasing power of Charles gave them augmented cause for alarm, they became more than ever anxious to consolidate their friendship. By the terms of this treaty, which had been signed on the 20th of April, by the Bishop of Tarbes and the Viscount de Turenne, on the part of Francis, it was agreed that the daughter of Henry VIII. should become the wife of the French king, should he be enabled to liberate himself from his engagement with the emperor's sister, and remain a widower until the princess should have attained a marriageable age; or in default of the monarch himself, that she should give her hand to the Duke of Orleans, his second son, at the same period; while the English monarch was, on his side, to renounce his claim to the title of

King of France, on consideration of receiving the annual sum of five millions of crowns; to join the league then forming against the emperor; and to furnish in the month of June following a force of nine thousand infantry, to which Francis was to add eighteen thousand foot, and a proportionate body of lances; the whole of which combined army was to march into Spain, to summon the emperor to deliver up the persons of the French princes upon the payment of two millions in gold as their ransom money; and in case of his refusal to accede to this proposition, to declare war against him in form.

The captivity of Clement VII, however, rendered some modification of this first treaty essential to the interests of both kingdoms; and, accordingly, on the 29th of May, it was decided by a second negotiation that the French army should alone undertake the invasion of Italy, while England should furnish the monthly sum of thirty thousand crowns, to defray the expenses of the war; and, finally, in order to obviate all possibility of future disagreement or misapprehension, the English monarch decided to despatch the cardinal-legate once more to France, in order that every article of the treaty should be duly and definitively arranged between Francis and himself.

The mission was one which enabled the haughty minister to indulge without restraint in that inordinate ostentation which formed so striking a feature in his character; and he accordingly set forth with a train rather befitting a sovereign than a subject. Having taken leave of Henry, he travelled on the first day from his palace of Hampton-court to Stone, in Kent, where he passed a night at Stone-place, the seat of Sir Richard Wingfield; and on the morrow at day-break he resumed his journey, accom-

panied by the Bishop of London, the Earl of Derby, and Sir Thomas More, and attended by a train of noblemen and gentlemen, who preceded him three abreast, all clad in velvet and satin, and wearing massive chains of gold about their necks. In the van of these rode a body of the cardinal's yeomen, and upwards of two hundred serving men in his liveries of orange-tawny, with his initials and cardinal's hat embroidered upon the breast of their doublets; while immediately before him were borne two tall crosses of beaten silver, two ponderous staves of the same precious metal, and his hat, and embroidered cloak-bag. Wolsey himself, according to his usual habit, bestrode, in affected humility, a sleek and ambling mule; but the magnificence of his apparel, and a led horse, richly caparisoned, for his occasional use, converted the seeming meekness into a pungent epigram; and thus, "the observed of all observers," he travelled to the coast; and with the same brilliant retinue, and in the same lordly pride, landed in France, where, having reached Amiens, he was received by Francis with all the state and ceremonial which could have been observed towards Henry himself.

The conferences lasted for a fortnight, and during that period nothing was omitted on the part of the French king and his courtiers which could flatter the vanity and arrogance of the English minister; every hour that could be wrested from public business was devoted to the most sumptuous entertainments; and as a mutual anxiety to complete and consolidate an amicable arrangement existed on both sides, four separate treaties were ultimately concluded; Wolsey, in conjunction with four other cardinals, addressing at the same time a letter

of respectful sympathy to the pope, in which they entreated him to appoint a vicar-general as the representative of his authority on the northern side of the Alps, in order that the interests of the Church might not suffer during his captivity.

From Amiens the cardinal-minister accompanied the French king to Compeigne, in order, as he affirmed, to pay his respects to the duchess-mother; and once more his reception was magnificent in the extreme. The lovely and brilliant court of Louise de Savoie put forth all its attractions, and balls, banquets, and other amusements filled up the time so fully that there scarcely appeared space for more serious occupation. Nevertheless Wolsey did not suffer himself to be engrossed by these diversions; but after having confided to Francis the conscientious misgivings of the English monarch on the subject of his marriage with Katherine of Aragon, and his determination to have it annulled by a papal bull, he seized a favourable moment to suggest to the French king the policy of effecting an alliance between his own sovereign and Marguerite de Valois.

The cheek of Francis flushed, and his brow grew dark.

"Your Eminence is, perhaps, not aware;" he said evasively; "that the hand of Madame d'Alençon is promised to the Duke de Bourbon."

"But your Majesty cannot possibly contemplate the completion of such an engagement;" persisted Wolsey; "The King of France would assuredly never bestow his sister in marriage upon a traitor."

"I have, in truth, no such intention;" was the cold reply; "but, nevertheless, until the engagement shall

have been dissolved, she is no longer free. Where there exists a previous and still unbroken tie, no new bond can be valid."

The cardinal bit his lip. "The duchess may herself refuse to ratify a pledge given without her sanction;" he said at length cautiously.

"Her refusal shall in that case suffice;" replied Francis; "for I will never consent to sacrifice her happiness to any consideration of state policy. All I can do therefore, Monseigneur, is to refer you to Madame d'Alençon herself. Let her decide."

"I can require no more;" said the haughty cardinal, with a profound bow, and an almost imperceptible smile; "The crown of England, and the hand of its young and chivalrous monarch, can scarcely be rejected by one of the proud blood of Valois."

The primate had, however, miscalculated the nature of the proud blood which he thus insidiously vaunted; for Marguerite de Valois replied to his degrading proposal with the most complete and unmitigated disdain; reminding him of the friendship which had existed between the ill-fated Katherine and her sister-in-law Queen Claude; and declaring that she never would be accessory to an act of tyranny and injustice. In vain did the cardinal represent that the delicacy of his sovereign's conscience alone induced him to consent to the contemplated divorce; the duchess was immovable; and Francis had begun to congratulate himself upon escaping through her means from a difficulty which threatened to dissolve the friendship between himself and his brother-monarch, when Wolsey, undeterred by the scorn of Madame

d'Alençon, after courteously lamenting the failure of a project which promised, as he affirmed, such beneficial results to both kingdoms, affected suddenly to remember that there was still another method by which their respective interests might still be equally assured; and, with unblushing pertinacity, suggested to the French king that, in lieu of that of his sister, he should bestow upon Henry the hand of the Princess Rénée, the sister of his late wife.

Herein, however, he was destined to be again baffled; for Francis himself instantly and resolutely refused his sanction to an alliance which would weaken his claim to the duchy of Brittany; and without any appeal to the princess, at once negatived the proposal. Wolsey was accordingly compelled to take leave of the French court without having accomplished the object which was without doubt the principal motive of his mission; and, without further delay, he returned to England with the same state and splendour as he had quitted it, enraged at the disappointment to which he had been subjected, but too politic to betray a symptom of his annoyance.

The sack of Rome, and the death of Bourbon, which occurred shortly after this embassy, only served to aggravate the difficulties of the French king; especially as his own envoys and those of England obtained nothing of the emperor save his renunciation of the duchy of Burgundy, and a circular addressed to the several sovereigns of Europe, in which he disclaimed all the responsibility of the siege, and explained the circumstances which had led to that disastrous event. He declared himself to have been injured and deceived; affirmed that he had never instructed the Duke de Bourbon to attack the holy city;

and concluded by asserting that, although the troops of the latter marched under the imperial banner, they did not recognise his own authority; and that as the duke himself had been killed at the very commencement of the assault, they had subsequently acted without instructions, and entirely according to the dictates of their own will.

But despite this deprecatory document, Charles was ill at ease. Gratified as he might be by feeling that he held in his own power the person of the pope, he was nevertheless embarrassed by this very consideration. His first impulse had been to remove him into Spain, in order that his custody might be more complete; but he was soon convinced of the impolicy of this project by the remonstrances of his own council, and the determined opposition of his Italian army; and thus he found himself compelled to abandon the design.

As the cold and unsatisfactory reply of the emperor gave them no guarantee for his ultimate acceptance of the proposed terms, neither Henry nor Francis felt himself bound to await further concessions; and they accordingly prepared to put the terms of their treaty in force, by the organization of an army which was to be maintained at their joint charge, under the command of the Maréchal de Lautrec, to whom it was confided at the express request of the English king. The troops were soon in motion; but before they had crossed the Alps, Francis effected a second treaty with Sforza and the states of Venice and Florence, who, eager to disembarrass Italy of the imperialist soldiery, were readily induced each to furnish their quota of troops in aid of the enterprise; and once more the power of Charles was threatened by a confederated army.

CHAPTER V.

[1526-27.]

RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO FAVOURITES—REMONSTRANCES OF MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—ROYAL RECRIMINATIONS—THE PALACE OF THE TOURNELLES—MARRIAGE À-LA-MODE—ANNE DE PISSELEU CREATED DUCHESS D'ÉTAMPES—DIANE DE POITIERS—LAST INTERVIEW OF FRANCIS AND MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND LEAVES THE COURT—THE JEWEL-CASKET—MARRIAGE OF MARGUERITE DE VALOIS AND THE KING OF NAVARRE—DOMESTIC DISSENSIONS—THE COURT OF BEARN—THE QUEEN'S SALOON—MARGUERITE PROTECTS THE REFORMERS, AND IS PERSECUTED BY THE SORBONNE—PARTIAL CONVERSION OF HENRY OF NAVARRE TO LUTHERANISM—FALSE POSITION OF THE PRINCESS.

CHAPTER V.

[1526-27.]

The political interests of his kingdom had, however, even while they compelled him to devote a portion of his time to public business, failed to withdraw Francis altogether from his more cherished pursuits. The favour of Mademoiselle d'Heilly increased daily; and became at length so undisguised, that the Countess de Châteaubriand, reluctant as she was to admit the truth even to herself, began to apprehend that her influence over the fickle mind of the monarch was lost for ever. The Duchess d'Angoulême, satisfied by her success in having undermined the power of a favourite who had dared to enter into a rivalry with herself, affected not to perceive the daily increasing passion of her son for the frail maid-of-honour, but flung herself totally into politics, leaving the intrigues of the court to unravel their own consequences; and her resolution of neutrality no sooner became evident, than an incessant struggle commenced between the rival beauties, which produced two several but very unequal factions among the courtiers. The countess, relying on the assurance of Marguerite de

Valois, trusted to old associations to win back her royal lover, but she had miscalculated the nature of the profligate monarch; those very memories ensured her failure. In vain did she remind him that for his sake she had abandoned home, and husband, and child; his retort was ready:—

"But, Madame, that was years ago. Time must long ere this have plucked the sting from so great a sacrifice."

"I have loved you, Sire;" persisted the former favourite, while the tears rained down her pale cheeks unchecked, for she remembered the early effect of those tears; "as sovereign was never loved before,—not for your crown—not for your proud name—but wholly for yourself; and I have loved you devotedly and entirely."

"Not entirely, Madame; you forget the admiral."

"How, Sire!" exclaimed the countess indignantly; "because it amused me to sport with the harmless vanity of M. de Bonnivet, would you make a crime of my thoughtless gaiety?"

"By no means;" said the king drily; "whatever others may have done. But all this is idle, Madame. Of what do you complain? Have I forbidden you the court? Have I failed in courtesy to one of the fairest ornaments of my circle? Surely you are unreasonable."

"I am answered, Sire;" said the countess, with a profound salutation and a sinking heart; "I have detained your Majesty too long."

Francis replied by a bow as ceremonious as her own; and Madame de Châteaubriand, after hesitating for a moment as if to assure herself that all was indeed over between them, slowly withdrew from his side, and was

lost in the crowd with which the saloon was filled; while the king, wearied by a scene in which he could not fail to feel that he had acted an ungenerous part, hastened to the side of Mademoiselle de Heilly, in order to overcome his annoyance.

Affairs of state having called Francis to Paris, the secret of the new favourite's entire ascendancy was unblushingly revealed; for at his express desire the duchess-mother, instead of inhabiting her residence at the Tuileries, took up her abode at the palace of the Tournelles, where one of the many towers whence it derived its name was fitted up with lavish splendour for Anne de Pisseleu. On the platform of the tower a pavilion had been erected, which commanded an extensive view, not only of the city itself but of the whole of the surrounding country. Windows of richly-painted glass, executed by the skilful pencil of Jean Cousin, admitted a subdued and gorgeous light, and every luxury which could be compressed within so confined a space, was made subservient to her caprices. This tower, which was connected with that habitually occupied by the king himself, had formerly been appropriated to Queen Claude, and had since her death hitherto remained untenanted; but none who remembered it during the lifetime of that pure and pious lady would have recognised it when prepared for its new mistress. The dark and richly-carved oaken *prie-dieu* was replaced by a marble group from the chisel of Jean Goujon, which awakened no associations of piety; the modest bed, with its heavy hangings of tapestry, was exchanged for a couch draped with blue velvet, and raised several feet from the floor,

as if even in sleep the pampered favourite were destined to assert her triumph over the neglected queen; rare and costly toys were scattered on every side; and the shrine was worthy of its idol, for all around was glare, glitter, and empty pomp.

Still Mademoiselle de Heilly was not happy. Unlike the discarded countess, she had fallen without remorse. Both her nature and her education had fitted her to prove an easy victim; and her first step in vice had rather excited than satisfied her ungovernable passions. It is also certain that she never loved in Francis more than his rank, and the opportunity which it afforded for the gratification of an ambition as uncompromising as it was insatiable; and the frail maid-of-honour was not long ere she discovered that her heart was independent of her vanity. She was, moreover, still distrustful of the influence of her rival; and it was consequently with unconcealed displeasure that she heard the king propose her own immediate marriage as a means of securing to her a rank at court which should render their intimacy less remarkable, and assure to her the privileges of which she was now deprived.

"Are you so soon weary of me?" she asked, as her large and searching eyes were riveted upon him.

"On the faith of a gentleman, *ma mie;*" replied Francis; "I never loved you so well as at this moment; but I would fain save you from the lampoons of the poetasters, and the jests of the courtiers."

"I scorn alike the one and the other;" was the haughty retort; "the friend of Francis of France can care little for the envious sneers of an idle rabble, be

they of what rank they may; but Anne de Pisseleu may be allowed to hesitate before she submits to the authority of a husband."

The king laughed. "There shall be no need for such a sacrifice;" he said, as he pressed her fingers to his lips. "Francis of France can as ill brook a rival as Anne de Pisseleu can submit to the thraldom of conjugal supremacy; and well you know that I have sworn to you an eternal fidelity."

"To me, in my turn;" said the bold favourite, averting her head, and affecting to conceal her tears.

"How now! What mean you, mademoiselle?" asked the monarch almost angrily. "Have I ever forfeited my royal word?"

"I was thinking of Madame de Châteaubriand;" said the maid of honour, with a pretty pout; "and of ——"

"Enough, *ma mie;*" interposed Francis with a frown. "Let the future speak for itself; it is unwise in both of us to look back upon the past. When I give you a husband, I shall give you rank, wealth, and consideration, but nothing more. Can you not trust me?"

Mademoiselle de Heilly had already become aware that she had ventured too much; and accordingly she shook back her long dark ringlets with a playful gesture, and glancing at the still overshadowed countenance of the monarch with a playful smile, she answered the question by another still more pertinent; "But are you quite sure, even you, the King of France, that so indulgent a husband can be found? And are you prepared to convince me that this threatened marriage will not separate me from my lord and sovereign?"

"To your first inquiry I reply, Anne;" said the enamoured monarch; "that the meek and careless husband is already found; and to the second, that in securing your advancement, I have not lost sight of my own claims."

And Francis spoke the truth. The ready tool of a licentious master had been secured in the person of the Count Jean de Brosse, the son of the Count Réné and of a daughter of Philippe de Commines. Réné had been a partisan of Bourbon, whose cause he had espoused, and under whose banner he had fallen at the battle of Pavia. His estates had been in consequence confiscated; and the young count, impoverished and disgraced, had, since his father's rebellion, dragged on an existence of penury and neglect by which his spirit had been broken and his pride prostrated. Of all his inheritance he had preserved only his honour, but this had hitherto remained unsullied; and those who still felt an interest in his fallen fortunes, had been accustomed to regard him with a respect and pity of which, upon the first temptation, he proved himself unworthy; for, dazzled by the prospect of returning to the court ennobled and enriched, he wilfully closed his eyes to the degradation by which these advantages were to be purchased, and readily acceded to the wishes of the king, by consenting to become the husband of the royal favourite upon the terms which were submitted to him.

His complaisance was richly repaid; all his estates were restored, he was appointed governor of Burgundy, received the collar of St. Michael, was created Count, and subsequently Duke d'Etampes, and accepted the hand of

THE DUCHESS D'ETAMPES.

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE MUSÉE ROYAL

Mademoiselle de Heilly towards the end of the year 1526.

Nor had the king miscalculated the amount of his gratitude. The new duchess was exposed to no remonstrances, subjected to no matrimonial interference, but assumed the dignity of her new rank without one reproach or representation calculated to sadden her triumph, or to humble her vanity. The court, it is true, was merry at the expense of the new-made benedict, but Jean de Brosse heroically entered upon his dearly-purchased privileges, and found in ostentation and self-indulgence a lethe for his shame.

Madame d'Etampes no sooner became the acknowledged and *official* mistress of the sovereign than the whole of the court circle were at her feet; and, had she only been known by the puerile and fulsome effusions of Marot and Sainte-Marthe, her name might have descended to posterity as that of the most gifted and virtuous of her sex; but unhappily poetry is not always truth. Gifted, indeed, she was, and beautiful:—"Fair 'mid the learned, learned 'mid the fair," as the latter poet had justly sung; but her gifts were perverted, and her beauty desecrated by vice. Envious, haughty, revengeful, licentious, grasping, ambitious, and mean, she seemed expressly created to pursue the disgraceful but brilliant career upon which she had so unhesitatingly entered.

Aware of her power over the king, the power of a strong mind over a weak one—and in his commerce with women Francis had constantly betrayed his weakness—her arrogance soon exceeded all bounds. In her respect for the duchess-mother she never failed, for she

had tact enough to profit by the example of Madame de Châteaubriand, and to avoid a rivalry which might ultimately terminate in her own disgrace; but there her forbearance ended; for the excessive love and devotion of the king, and the universal adulation by which she was surrounded, so inflated her vanity, that she regarded all other enmity as trivial and unimportant; nor did she deceive herself. In a short time all court favour and court advancement was to be successfully sought only at her hands; and she used her influence without scruple or compunction.

Nevertheless, however, the royal favourite was not even yet altogether free from anxiety. She saw and felt her power, it is true, but she doubted its stability; for she was aware that her defeated rival had still a powerful supporter in the Duchess d'Alençon, who had never ceased to exhibit her annoyance at the coldness which had been latterly evinced by the king towards her friend. Nor was this all; for another and a threatening star had arisen on the court horizon, in the person of the superb Diana de Poitiers, who had, to use the quaint words of a chronicler of the period, "long made a hole in the roof of the château of Anet;" and abandoning her aged husband and his gloomy domain for the brilliant circles of royalty, proved how little the restraints of wedded life were suited to her free and volatile tastes.

It is probable that Louise de Savoie, although she had, as we have already shown, ceased to take an active part in the intrigues by which the time of her son was almost entirely occupied, did not see without a certain satisfaction the undisguised pleasure with which he on

all occasions welcomed the presence of La Grande Sénéchale, as it tended to create a diversion calculated to render the Duchess d'Etampes more cautious than she might otherwise have been in exhibiting her influence over the monarch; while the position of Diana herself, as the wife of a powerful noble, who, either out of weakness or cowardice, still continued, despite the levity of her conduct, to afford to her at least the protection of his name, and to close his ears to the rumours which were rife against her fair fame, gave her a marked advantage over the *parvenue* duchess, who was herself far from unconscious of the fact.

But although Francis betrayed, almost carelessly, his admiration of the magnificent Madame de Brézé, and that there were not wanting many tongues which were ready to assert, that from the period of her father's reprieve, her veteran husband had found it expedient to remain blind to her understanding with the king, it is certain that no public or ostentatious exhibition of his preference escaped her royal admirer, who gave no evidence of seeking the rivalship of the dissolute court poet, or the half score of idle young nobles who sported her colours in the lists, and murmured her name over their wine-cups.

And the secret was an easy one to read. Diana possessed only her beauty, for at this period she was still too unlettered in the lore of a court to assume the semblance of a feeling by which she was not really actuated. Her nature was weak, but not yet entirely vitiated. Naturally greedy of admiration, she valued the homage paid to her attractions for its own sake, caring little for

the rank of him by whom the incense was offered up. Marot sang her praises in melodious verse, and she smiled upon the reckless and unprincipled minstrel who ministered to her vanity. He professed to love her alone, and she did not seek to doubt his sincerity. In a word, Diana de Poitiers was still in the infancy of vice; passion had not yet seared her heart; and all that she sought to do was to live on, in the splendour of her beauty and of her triumph, trampling upon the past, and careless of the future.

In this phase of her existence the monarch was to her only another and a distinct admirer. She did not speculate upon the consequences of his preference, nor seek to aggrandise herself by his smiles. Her beauty was, indeed, a barbed arrow; but her total absence of knowledge of the world had plucked away the feather by which its aim is guided. Little, therefore, at this period had Anne de Pisseleu to dread from the pleasure-loving Diana, although there were moments in which she felt disposed to apprehend the contrary; nor was the rivalry of even Françoise de Foix more dangerous; for the meek and timid countess, although still beautiful and fascinating, had lost the charm of novelty, and was, moreover, ignorant of those more refined and unscrupulous arts of coquetry in which she was herself an adept, and which were so well calculated to enthral the profligate nature of Francis.

A struggle had, indeed, commenced between the past and the present favourite, but it was too unequal to leave any doubt of its ultimate result. The tears of Madame de Châteaubriand were far less captivating than

the smiles of the Duchess d'Etampes; and the regrets of the one were tedious after the blandishments of the other. In affairs of the heart the past is powerless, while the present is all in all; and although the betrayed countess did not venture upon reproach, she was soon taught to feel that there was a tacit rebuke in her very presence.

In vain did the Princess Marguerite exhort her to patience, and represent the constitutional inconstancy of her royal brother; Madame de Châteaubriand was not to be convinced; but humiliated by the perpetual mortifications which she was called upon to endure at the hands of her rival, and which her newly-acquired rank enabled her to inflict with added facility; as well as by the neglect of the courtiers who had once been at her feet, and whose bearing was, as she well knew, but a reflex of the feeling of the sovereign, she at length determined to make a final appeal to the affection of Francis by proposing to leave the court.

It was a bitter expedient, for she was aware that it might fail, and then, what would remain to her of all the brilliant visions for which she had sacrificed husband, and child, and home, and that fair fame which once forfeited can never be reclaimed? But her present position was untenable consistently with that dignity which still remained to her as a woman. The court was made merry by daily epigrams of which she was the subject, and whose authorship she had little difficulty in tracing to the *clique* of the new favourite. Even those whom she had served in her prosperity had forgotten their obligations, for few things are more inconvenient than such

memories when they interfere with present interests; and the enemies to whom she was indebted for her temporary elevation, were overjoyed at her discomfiture, and made no secret of their triumph.

The heart of Françoise de Foix was crushed within her. She was only too well aware of the nature of the reception which she must expect from her outraged husband, even should he consent once more to accord to her the shelter of his roof; and although her pride bade her take the decisive step of self-exile from that court of which she had so lately been the idol, there were a thousand conflicting fears, and terrors, and even hopes, which induced her to delay her purpose. Day after day, therefore, she lingered; but at length, on the return of the royal circle to Chambord, oppressed by insult, and heartsick with disappointment, she resolved to decide her fate.

While in the capital she had already become aware that the king studiously avoided every opportunity of finding himself alone with her, and there it had been easy for him to do so; but his habits in the country were more excursive and independent, and the unhappy woman trusted even yet that in a private interview, should she succeed in obtaining it, she might awaken in his bosom some of the old and cherished feelings of the past.

The very name of Chambord was a spell in her favour. Had not the king declared that it was for her sake he desired to see his favourite retreat become splendid beyond all the palaces of France? Had he not assured her that the costly mirrors which lined its saloons were intended principally to reflect her beauties,

and the magnificent works of art in which it abounded to administer to her luxury? And yet, the walls had scarcely been raised, the skill of the painter and the statuary had been but partially employed, and already another lorded it where she was to have reigned supreme.

Surely this could not last! It must be merely a frightful dream, from which she should once more awaken to light and joy! It could not be at Chambord that her royal lover would coldly sacrifice her to a rival! And then the erring wife dashed away her tears to gaze upon the costly contents of her casket, where, pillowed upon velvet, lay the glittering gems presented to her at different periods by the king, and which were of almost fabulous value. She thought not of their intrinsic worth, however, as she bent over them with dim eyes and a throbbing heart; to her they were, indeed, beyond all price, but that was simply because their enamelled setting was enriched with the device of the salamander, the crest of Francis, their entwined initials, and sundry tender mottoes, invented by Marguerite de Valois at the express request of the king, for their embellishment.

How clearly and acutely did she recall the occasion upon which each had been proffered! He had clasped that bracelet upon her arm, as an earnest of their reconciliation, when after having reproached her with her love for Bonnivet, he had followed up his remonstrances by engraving with a diamond that he wore upon his finger, on one of the panes of the window near which they stood, the often quoted lines,—

"Souvent femme varie,
Mal habil qui s'y fie,"—

and had been rebuked by her silent tears. And it was here, at Chambord, that the bracelet had been clasped on! That carcanet—that ring—each had its memory, and it was for these that she valued them. They threw her back upon the past—the brilliant past—and although she loved a monarch, she was still weak enough to hope even amid her fears.

Thus had she been engaged when, on a brilliant day in summer, she saw the king traversing the parterre in front of the palace, accompanied by Primaticcio; and aware that the Italian would offer no impediment to her project, but would retire as soon as she approached, she impulsively threw on her mantle; and hurrying to the garden, took a by-path that led immediately to the point towards which she at once discovered that they were bent. Her anticipations were correct, for on turning an angle Francis suddenly came upon her ere he had time to evade the meeting. As he recognised her he started, and involuntarily retreated a pace or two; but the countess remained rooted to the spot. Her hands were clasped tightly together, her eyes riveted upon his face, and the words, "Hear me, Sire—" escaped her trembling lips.

Thus addressed, Francis slightly raised his plumed hat, and approached her; while Primaticcio discreetly retraced his steps until he was beyond the reach of their voices.

"Were you seeking me, Madame?" asked the king coldly.

"Alas! yes, Sire; and I have lately done so unavailingly;" replied the countess with effort.

"If it be to reproach me that you are here, countess—"

"Nay, not so!" exclaimed Françoise de Foix. "Not so; who shall dare reproach the King of France. I am here only to crave one word, one little word of kindness, ere I leave the court for ever."

"Leave the court, Madame!" echoed Francis with ill-concealed gratification. "Is not your resolution somewhat sudden? Not, however," he added with a chilling courtesy which fell like an icebolt upon the agitated spirit of his victim; "that we would seek to detain you near us if you have other and more pressing duties. We are already too deeply your debtor for the charm which you have long, very long, thrown over our circle. Do you purpose returning to Brittany?"

Françoise de Foix pressed her hand heavily upon her heart to still its throbbings, as she answered with an ineffectual attempt at composure; "With the permission of your majesty."

"It shall not be withheld, Madame, since such is your desire; and it will give us sincere pleasure to hear of your prosperity and happiness in your retirement." And once more the plumed hat was gracefully raised from the royal brow; a gesture of the hand brought the great artist again to the side of the king, and the dishonoured wife was left standing alone under the bright sky and the waving boughs, as Francis of France and his *protégé* resumed their walk.

And she stood there long, paralyzed alike in mind and limb. She had, indeed, in her moments of despondency, apprehended that she might be permitted to

depart, but never that she should depart *thus*—without one regret—without one expostulation—without one word of tenderness or explanation. Alas, poor woman! she had not paused to reflect that princes do not condescend to temporise when their interests are not involved. What was she now but a pebble in the path of the king, which, for his greater convenience, had been removed? Sympathy! Where could she look for sympathy? The guilty have no friends. What a tide of thought and memory rolled over her brain in the brief half hour that she stood there—there, where the monarch who had lured her to her ruin, had left her without a sigh! what visions of the giddy height from which she had fallen—the fatal precipice down which she had recklessly plunged—the foul stain which she had affixed to an honourable name, and the inexorable husband by whom her dishonour would be avenged! And then, with a frantic grasp she clutched her mantle about her, and staggered back, drunk with despair, to the mocking splendour of her luxurious apartment.

And one gentle look, one kindly expression, might have softened the fiercest pang of this unutterable anguish, and left her at least an illusion with which to brighten the fearful future; but the boon, poor as it was, had been denied.

Truly Francis I, the vaunted of history, and the heir of fame, was a chivalrous monarch!

The same evening, in the circle of the duchess-mother, the king announced with a courtesy at once suave and stately, that the Countess de Châteaubriand, whose health had been for some time precarious, had solicited his

permission to retire from the court; a request to which, under the circumstances, he had reluctantly acceded. The astonishment elicited by this intelligence was universal. The eyes of Louise de Savoie and the Duchess d'Etampes sought each other, and exchanged a look of triumph; while the Princess Marguerite silently averted her head, and by a powerful effort retained the tears which endeavoured to force their way. The die was, however, cast, for this public announcement from the lips of the king had effectually prevented all change of purpose on the part of the countess; and nothing now remained for her save to depart, and expiate by a future of remorse the errors of the past.

And fearfully were they indeed expiated. Varillas and Sauval both assert that on her return to Brittany—for she offered herself on her retirement from the court a passive victim to the vengeance of her husband—M. de Châteaubriand imprisoned her for a time in a vault beneath the château into which the light could not penetrate; and subsequently caused the veins of her arms and feet to be opened, by which she bled to death. This account is, however, not universally credited; although it is certain that she was subjected by her infuriated husband to the most cruel and unrelenting treatment; which, added to the despair that had taken possession of her mind after her last interview with the king, rendered her weary of life, and ill able to contend against another and an unlooked-for mortification, which gave the last blow to her bruised and broken spirit.

Only a few weeks after the retirement of Madame de Châteaubriand from the court, the monarch presented to

the Duchess d'Etampes a magnificent *parure* of brilliants and pearls; but even while the eyes of the favourite glistened with delight at the costly offering, a shade gathered upon her brow which was instantly perceived by Francis, who anxiously inquired its cause.

"I admit the beauty of the jewels;" said Anne de Pisseleu, as she threw her white arms about the neck of the enamoured king; "but to me they are mere stones, to be bought with gold, and lost without regret: baubles, which all who are wealthy can command alike. They boast nothing distinctive. They tell nothing either of Francis of France, or of her to whom his smiles are all in all. How different were the gems which I have seen upon the neck and arms of the Countess de Châteaubriand! There every separate ornament breathed of tenderness and devotion. Every trinket was its own history. There was a world of love upon every link and clasp of those enamelled ornaments; and you give me merely gold and stones, and would have me prize them as she valued the heart-record which rendered hers at once a memorial and a marvel."

And Anne de Pisseleu wept; and the king wiped away the tears which dimmed her bright eyes; and at length, in a moment of weakness which betrayed him into forgetfulness of his dignity not only as a monarch but even as a man, he consented to write with his own hand to the abandoned countess, and to reclaim the gifts which had been freely offered.

Madame d'Etampes again triumphed. In her cold and selfish heart there was no place for the sentiment which she affected. She sought only further to humiliate

an already vanquished rival; and her eyes once more sparkled as she placed before her infatuated lover the costly writing-stand of pearl and ebony which occupied a recess in her apartment. She would brook no delay in this new caprice, and the unworthy letter was completed in her presence; the restoration of the jewels was demanded; and all that Francis could do to mitigate the enormity of the meanness which he was thus induced to commit, was to assert that a portion of them were the property of the crown, and consequently unalienable.

Who shall venture to say with what melancholy rapture the unhappy countess had hung over those cherished symbols of the irrevocable past in her gloomy captivity, unvisited as it was by one word or look of kindness? Who shall venture to imagine the pang with which she received from the hand of her imperious and disdainful husband this last missive from her royal seducer. The result is, however, matter of history. In a few days the countess delivered to the messenger of the king a casket of sandal-wood curiously inlaid, which she instructed him to convey with all speed to his master; her command was obeyed, and the casket was placed in the hands of Francis, who at once transferred it, unopened, to those of Madame d'Etampes.

The exulting favourite raised the lid with a proud smile and an eager hand; but her triumph was short-lived. The jewel-case was, indeed, full to overflowing; gold and gems were alike there, even to the veriest trifle which Madame de Châteaubriand had owed to the whilome liberality of the sovereign, but not an ornament remained intact. The ruin was complete. The precious

stones had been wrenched from their settings, and the richly laboured ore was broken into a thousand fragments. Above them lay a letter addressed to the king. It was the last cry of a broken heart!

"Sire;" ran the missive, whose contents were rendered nearly illegible by the excessive agitation of the writer; "Since it has pleased your majesty to reclaim the gifts which I owed to your generosity, I restore them to you. Not a jewel or a grain of gold will be found wanting. The devices alone are absent; and they are so deeply impressed upon my mind, and so inexpressibly dear to my heart, that I have effaced them, as I could not brook that they should ever minister to the happiness of another."

That Francis, egotist as he was, felt the tacit rebuke conveyed in these temperate and uncomplaining words is certain, for the casket, with its mutilated contents, was once more restored to its rightful owner.

It is probable that Madame d'Alençon might still have made an effort to restore her friend to court, had she not been at this period too much engrossed by her own sorrows to find leisure for sympathy in those of others. On the 24th of January of the same year, (1527,) she had, at the command of her brother, bestowed her hand upon Henri d'Albret II, the elder son of Jean, King of Navarre, and of Catherine de Foix, from whom Ferdinand of Aragon had wrested a portion of their states during the reign of Louis XII. The marriage took place at St. Germain-en-Laye; and in the contract Francis bound himself to summon the emperor to restore the usurped territories, and upon his refusal to do so,

even engaged to regain them by force of arms; while he moreover assigned to the bride, as her dowry, the duchies of Alençon and Berri, the counties of Armagnac and Perche, and all the several lordships which she possessed, either in right of her first husband, or as her own personal appanage.

But once more the soul of Marguerite de Valois sickened at the tie by which she was bound; and sighed over the untimely fate of Charles de Bourbon, whose wife she had so lately hoped that she might yet become. The character of the young King of Navarre was ill suited to her own; with considerable personal bravery, and good intentions, he was weak, moody, irritable, and jealous. Like the Duke d'Alençon, he was unable to appreciate the shining qualities and high-heartedness of his bride; while the princess, worn out by mortification and disappointment, was less inclined than formerly either to conceal her feelings, or to put any constraint upon her tastes. Thus perpetual dissensions arose between them, which became subjects of court scandal, and more than once exacted the interference of Francis himself. In one pursuit alone the King and Queen of Navarre exhibited the same interest, and that one was in ameliorating the condition of their subjects; an attempt in which they were so successful that Marguerite soon became the idol of the people.

Two children were the issue of this ill-assorted union. Jean, the elder, died in 1530, at two years of age; and the second, born in 1529, was the illustrious and unhappy Jeanne d'Albret, the mother of Henry IV.

After having invited to Bearn the most able agricul-

turists of France, and taught their peasantry the true value of the soil upon which they laboured, the two young sovereigns founded cities, and embellished the royal residences, especially the castle of Pau, which they moreover surrounded with magnificent gardens; and although Henri d'Albret never ultimately attempted to reconquer Navarre, owing to the impossibility of procuring from his royal brother-in-law the promised assistance, he took such wise precautions as enabled him to preserve the remainder of his kingdom from the encroachments of the emperor.

The court was held alternately at Pau and at Nérac, and rivalled that of France in wit and beauty, if not in splendour. The immediate circle of Marguerite herself was composed of the most lovely and the most intellectual women of the age, and of the handsomest and most gifted men. In her saloons were to be seen all the aristocracy of talent, all the nobility of intellect. Scholars, poets, musicians, and painters, were her courtiers; and graciously and royally did she repay their homage. Her valets-de-chambre were Clement Marot, Bonaventure des Periers,[1] Claude Gruget, Antoine du Moulin, and Jean

[1] Bonaventure des Periers was one of the first satirists of the age, and the author of several works of celebrity. He translated the comedies of Terence into French verse, and the dialogues of Plato in prose; but of the former he published only the *Andria*. These were succeeded by the *Treaty on the Four Cardinal Virtues* of Seneca, which he brought out anonymously, as well as the *Cymbalum Mundi*, to which he feared to affix his name; and which induced the arrest of his printer, Jean Morin, in whose house the whole edition of his works was seized in 1538. He had previously (in the year 1535) been appointed secretary and valet-de-chambre to Marguerite de Valois, through whose protection he was enabled to escape with a

de la Haye; a galaxy in themselves, who won for her saloon the designation of *the real Parnassus;* and well did it deserve its name; for there every muse had its niche, and every altar its votary.

But while both art and literature were fostered and encouraged at the court of Bearn, they were not suffered to absorb all the energies of its inhabitants. The queen, whose inquiring spirit ever sought to penetrate into the new and the unknown, had been, as we have already shown, strongly attracted by the religion of the Reformers; and among the philosophers whom she had drawn into her circle were many whose minds had been similarly influenced. To the arguments of these deep and earnest thinkers she accordingly lent a greedy ear, and she soon learnt to sympathize alike in their views, and in their hopes; while her enthusiasm was further excited by the

simple reprimand, although he was compelled to retire to Lyons; where, instead of evincing any repentance for his imprudence, he caused a new edition of the work to be printed. Both are now extremely rare. His appointment to the household of the Queen of Navarre was occasioned by the annoyance to which she was publicly subjected from the slanders which had coupled her name dishonourably with that of Clement Marot, whom he succeeded. His end was tragical. Compelled to quit the service of his royal mistress, for whom he did not attempt to conceal his passion, he became so depressed and desperate, that it was found necessary to watch him closely, in order to prevent his committing suicide. The inadvertence of a moment, however, sufficed to render all previous precaution unavailing; for, having secured an opportunity, he was found pierced by his own sword; and that so frightfully, that the point of the weapon, which had entered his chest, had forced its way through his spine. In 1544, a collection of his works was edited and published by his friend Antoine du Moulin, who then occupied his position in the court of Marguerite.

pious eloquence of Roussel, Calvin, and Le Fèvre d'Etaples, who, while preaching the new doctrine, were themselves so thoroughly imbued by its truth as to carry conviction to their hearers.

Nor was the queen merely a passive convert to the Reformed faith. She caused the Latin prayers of the church to be translated into French, and even had the courage to place the missal in the hands of Francis himself, and to distribute it among the courtiers, by whom its use was adopted until condemned by the Sorbonne as heretical, and prohibited by a decree of Parliament. She, moreover, composed a mystical poem, entitled "The Mirror of the Sinful Soul;" but this also fell under the ban of the Sorbonne, and was only saved from annihilation by the express command of the king; while the rage of the students was excited to so unmeasured a degree by its appearance, that at the college of Navarre a mystery was enacted, in which the princess was represented under the character of a *Fury of Hell;* an exhibition of audacity which Francis resented by sending his archer-guard to arrest the culprits. Popular excitement had, however, reached its height, and the royal troops were driven back with violence and insult; nor was it until Marguerite herself became their advocate that the originators of the insult obtained their pardon.

So long as she had remained in France the princess had been compelled to act with a certain caution. She was aware that she had rendered herself unpopular by her leaning towards reform; and she feared the effect of her opinions upon the popularity of her brother; but she

was no sooner established in her new kingdom than she ceased to dissemble. She had, however, still much to contend against. Montmorenci had, on one occasion, when Francis was complaining of the disaffection of the Parisians, been bold enough to declare, that if his majesty really desired to restore peace to his capital by the extermination of the heretics, he would do well to commence with his courtiers, and with some who were even more nearly allied to him, particularly the Queen of Navarre his sister; but the indignant reply of the king convinced him that, upon this occasion, he had outrun his discretion; and the effect produced upon the mind of Marguerite herself when the conversation was repeated to her, was destined never to be effaced.

Even in her own little court at Bearn, moreover, she was fated to endure perpetual trial and disappointment. The pious and venerable D'Etaples expired almost in her presence at the age of 101 years, reproaching himself for not having remained in France, where he might have secured the crown of a martyr; while Calvin, Marot, and other Reformers, who began to apprehend that from the increased feeling of hostility evinced towards their protectress, they were no longer in safety even at Pau, where Henri d'Albret had begun to exhibit symptoms of distaste both to their doctrines and their presence, prepared to pass into Piedmont.

Nor were they premature in their resolution, for Marot, whose vanity was more powerful than his religion, had so undisguisedly boasted of his favour with the queen, that the suspicious nature of Henri was aroused, and he reproached his wife with her levity of conduct in such

unmeasured and insulting terms, that she was compelled to appeal to the authority and support of her brother; nor was it until he had so far forgotten his manhood and the dignity of his station as to lift his hand against her, that even Francis himself succeeded in protecting her from his violence.

Unstable as water, Henri of Navarre no sooner found himself powerless than he began to feel, or to affect, an interest in the opinions of his wife; and ere long she induced him to participate in her religious exercises; to read the Gospels, to assist in the Psalms, to listen to the sermons of the Reformed preachers, and even to receive the Sacrament, which was administered in a vault of the castle; but the conversion of the supple king was merely superficial, although it was so far serviceable to his more earnest helpmate that it enabled her to pursue her spiritual career without impediment; and, accordingly, she multiplied her pious writings; and the same hand which produced the Heptameron was employed on hymns, and pious poems, and biblical dramas, which she caused to be represented by the professional actors at her court.

This imprudence, however, drew upon her the animosity of the Cardinals of Armagnac and Grammont, who expostulated warmly with Francis upon the indignity which she had thus offered to the Church of Rome; and their remonstrances were so powerful that the king found himself compelled to summon her to his presence, in order that she might justify her conduct. Marguerite obeyed upon the instant, and, attended by the Governor of Guinne, proceeded to Paris, where she was coldly and

even sternly received by her brother; but she was too well aware of her influence to lose her courage, and she replied to his reproaches, say her historians, with such admirable tact and self-possession, that he declared himself convinced of her innocence of all bias towards Lutheranism, and refused to listen to the arguments of her accusers. Warned, nevertheless, by her peril, she from that moment avoided all public demonstration of her secession from the Romish Church, and contented herself by less ostentatious proofs of her conversion. She still maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with Calvin, and assisted Marot in his translation of the Psalms; but she observed the Romish ceremony of confession, attended mass, endowed hospitals, founded an asylum for orphans, and gave largely to the poor, under the auspices of the priests.

The position of Marguerite was a false one, alike in seeming and in spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

[1527-30.]

FRANCIS SENDS AMBASSADORS TO HENRY VIII.—MAGNIFICENCE OF THE CARDINAL-MINISTER—THE MONARCHS OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND DECLARE WAR AGAINST THE EMPEROR—REPLY OF CHARLES V.—THE DEFIANCE—THE IMPERIAL AMBASSADOR RETIRES FROM FRANCE—INTEMPERATE BEARING OF FRANCIS I.—THE ROYAL LETTER—THE IMPERIAL CARTEL—BURGUNDY, THE HERALD-AT-ARMS OF THE EMPEROR, ARRIVES ON THE FRENCH FRONTIER—HE IS DETAINED BY THE GOVERNOR OF BAYONNE—BURGUNDY FOLLOWS THE KING TO PARIS—HE REFUSES TO REMOVE HIS COAT-OF-MAIL AT THE GATES OF THE CAPITAL—FRANCIS GRANTS HIM AN AUDIENCE, BUT REFUSES TO LET HIM DELIVER HIS MESSAGE—BURGUNDY LEAVES FRANCE—THE REGAL DUEL IS NOT FOUGHT—THE RIVAL SOVEREIGNS ENDEAVOUR TO EVADE A WAR—ANDREA DORIA TRANSFERS HIS ALLEGIANCE FROM THE FRENCH KING TO THE EMPEROR—LAUTREC MAKES A LAST EFFORT TO DEFEND GENOA—THE PLAGUE ATTACKS THE FRENCH ARMY—DEATH OF LAUTREC—THE SIEGE OF GENOA IS RAISED—PIETRO DE NAVARRO AND SALUZZO DIE OF THEIR WOUNDS—THE COUNT DE ST. POL IS DEFEATED IN THE MILANESE—ITALY IS LOST TO THE FRENCH—EXHAUSTED STATE OF EUROPE—CLEMENT VII. MAKES TERMS WITH THE EMPEROR—FRANCIS NEGOTIATES WITH CHARLES V.—MADAME D'ANGOULÊME AND MARGUERITE D'AUTRICHE MEET AT CAMBRAY, AND EFFECT A TREATY—LA PAIX DES DAMES—UNDIGNIFIED CONCESSIONS OF FRANCIS I.—THE FRENCH KING ABANDONS HIS ALLIES—ANNE DE MONTMORENCI IS DESPATCHED TO RANSOM THE YOUNG PRINCES—DUPRAT ENDEAVOURS TO DEFRAUD THE EMPEROR—QUEEN ELEONORA AND THE PRINCES LAND IN FRANCE—THE KING AND HIS BETROTHED BRIDE MEET AT MONT-DE-MARSAN—THE ROYAL MARRIAGE—FRANCIS AND HIS SUITE PROCEED TO BORDEAUX—CORONATION OF THE QUEEN—HER SOLEMN ENTRY INTO THE CAPITAL—PUBLIC REJOICINGS—MELANCHOLY OF THE ROYAL BRIDE—THE WIFE AND THE MISTRESS—INFATUATION OF FRANCIS I. FOR MADAME D'ETAMPES—THE FORTUNES OF A FAVOURITE'S FAMILY—THE DUCHESS D'ETAMPES PROTECTS MEN OF LETTERS—THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCES—INSOLENT OSTENTATION OF MADAME D'ETAMPES.

CHAPTER VI.

[1527-30.]

SHORTLY after the departure of Wolsey from France, Francis in his turn despatched an embassy to Henry VIII, to ratify in his name the treaty which had been concluded between the two powers; and to convey to him the Collar of St. Michael. Anne de Montmorenci, to whom the mission was entrusted, was accompanied by a number of the first nobles of the kingdom, and a body of six hundred horse; and was received at Dover by numerous prelates and men of rank, by whom he was accompanied to the capital. A guard of honour exceeding a thousand men formed his escort, and great crowds followed him to the very gates of the residence which had been prepared for his reception. Two days subsequently he was conducted to the castle of Greenwich where the king was then residing, and welcomed with regal magnificence, both by the monarch and his minister. A succession of brilliant entertainments were given; and the Princess Mary performed in several of the comedies which were enacted for the amusement of the French courtiers.

At the close of these royal festivities, the French envoys were conveyed in the state barges to the palace at Hampton-Court, which was at that period completed, and where they remained for several days, amazed and bewildered by a pomp which outvied that of the king himself. Gorgeous services of plate, hangings of precious tapestry, mirrors of almost fabulous dimensions, and glorious works of art, crowded the interior of the building; while its immense extent, and graceful architecture, together with the spacious and elaborately-designed gardens by which it was surrounded, with their stately terraces, numerous fountains, and the variety of foreign birds which peopled the gilded aviaries, excited their admiration, and increased their wonder. Hence they returned to Greenwich, where, after a farewell banquet, they took their leave of the king and the cardinal, leaving Jean de Bellay, Bishop of Bayonne, as the ambassador of Francis at the court of England.

On the 22d of January, 1528, Guienne, the French king-at-arms, and Clarencieux, who bore the same rank in England, each carrying his heraldic badge upon his left arm in order to assume it while uttering his defiance, presented themselves before the emperor at Burgos, who awaited their appearance in the midst of his barons; and having invoked the immunities accorded to their office, they proceeded to read aloud their several declarations of war, which were, although firm and definitive, nevertheless couched in temperate and even courteous terms.

The emperor listened throughout in dignified but moody silence, never betraying either by word or gesture the slightest irritation or impatience; but the ceremony

was no sooner concluded than he replied with scornful irony, that he could not comprehend how the King of France, who had made war upon him during six or seven years without any formal declaration to that effect, should now see fit to send him a defiance, when, as his prisoner, he was no longer free to do so; and instructed Guienné to remind his sovereign, that if he were, indeed, as tenacious of his honour as he would fain have it appear, he would do well to remember and reply to a message which he had sent to him two years previously through M. de Calvimont, his ambassador. The defiance of Henry VIII. he declared himself ready to accept, although he was aware that it had emanated from the cardinal-legate, who had never forgiven him for not having, by force of arms, secured his elevation to the popedom, as both he and the king his master, at his instigation, had urged him to do. He then delivered to the two heralds his written replies to their respective sovereigns. That which was addressed to Francis was merely a recapitulation of their mutual misunderstanding, and the several negotiations into which they had entered; but the bitterness of feeling, and the jealous animosity which it betrayed, were well calculated to exasperate the proud spirit of the French king.

In reply to the defiance of Henry, and the reasons he advanced for the extreme step which he had taken, Charles reproached him with his intention of divorcing his aunt, Katherine of Aragon, and thus bastardizing his daughter Mary, to whom he was himself betrothed; and declared that little confidence could be placed in the zeal which the English monarch affected for the pope, when he thus disregarded the principles of religion.

The allusion to a message which he had never received, but which had been purposely withheld from him by his ambassador, who had shrunk from the invidious task of repeating to his royal master so gross an implication upon his honour, aroused the haughty nature of Francis; and he forthwith wrote to M. de Calvimont, who was still in Spain, demanding an immediate explanation. Calvimont was, however, too good a courtier to commit himself; and he, consequently, affected to have forgotten the exact purport of the words addressed to him by the emperor, pleading the length of time which had elapsed since the interview; and wrote a respectful request to Charles himself, that he would repeat them, in order that he might be enabled to submit their purport to his sovereign.

The reply of the emperor was speedy and disdainful. He had, he said, asserted upon that occasion, as he was still prepared to do, that the King of France had basely and wilfully violated the pledge which he had given at Madrid; and that, should he affect to deny that such was the case, he would maintain the truth of his accusation to his teeth, and with his sword. And, moreover, that he had then and there declared, that while Christian Europe was exposed to aggression on all sides, the sovereigns to whom were intrusted the lives and welfare of their subjects, had no right to involve them in merely personal quarrels, which might be better and more fitly terminated by their own individual prowess; an opinion which he still maintained.

On the receipt of this intelligence the exasperation of Francis exceeded all bounds; and in his first paroxysm

of passion he caused Perenot de Grandvelle, the imperial ambassador, to be arrested, as Charles had previously done those of France and the other confederated powers; but on ascertaining that they had been again set at liberty, he revoked the order; and on the 28th of March gave him his farewell audience, in the presence of the assembled court.

On requesting a safe-conduct, the ambassador expressed his regret at the renewed misunderstanding that had arisen between the two countries; and while thanking the king for the consideration and courtesy which he had experienced during his sojourn in France, begged his majesty to pardon him, if, in the exercise of his duties, he had ever been unfortunate enough to incur his displeasure.

Francis replied by testifying his regret, that recent circumstances had compelled him to act with severity towards a person whom he so much esteemed, and whom he should always be ready to serve when occasion offered; and then, recurring to public business, he desired him to convey his answer to the challenge of the emperor.

From this dangerous service M. de Grandvelle however excused himself, alleging that his official functions had ceased; whereupon the king commanded Robertet, the secretary of state, to read aloud the cartel which he had caused to be drawn up.

This document was at once unkingly and undignified. Passion had supplanted alike prudence and courtesy in its compilation. It evinced no trace of the chivalrous feeling upon which the French monarch prided himself, but betrayed a coarse and bitter violence that was ill

suited to the exalted rank of the writer:—"If you have sought to charge us," ran one passage; "with having acted towards you in any way unbefitting to a man of honour, we say that you have lied in your throat; and that each time you repeat it, you will lie. Being resolved to defend our honour so long as we have life, and having been by you falsely accused, henceforward we shall write to you no more; you have only to name the place, and we will meet you in arms."

Nor was even its coarseness the only reproach which must be visited upon the cartel of Francis, for it is certain that he condescended to a quibble where he elsewhere remarked:—"You have accused us, by declaring that we had pledged our faith, and that in default of that pledge we withdrew from your custody and power." An assertion which he must have been aware could never have been made by the emperor, who had publicly recognised his conditional departure from his dominions.

Charles V. was not slow to detect the imprudence of which his adversary had been guilty; for after having in his reply specified the bank of the Bidassoa as the place of meeting, he remarked in allusion to this accusation:—"Such words were never uttered by us; we never pretended to have received your pledge not to leave Spain, but only your promise that you would again return according to our prescribed agreement; and had you done so, you would not have been wanting either to your children or to your honour. The spot which I have named;" he added with cold sarcasm; "must be familiar to you, as it was there I restored you to liberty,

and received your children at your hands as pledges for the performance of the treaty which you have so shamefully violated. You can advance no reasonable objection to such a place of meeting, as it is equally the boundary of both kingdoms; a single second on each side shall make the necessary preparations, and select the weapons; and if you indeed value your honour, you can no longer advance any pretext for failing to keep the appointment."

Charged with this missive, a herald-at-arms was at once despatched to France by the emperor; who was so far from apprehending that his adversary would evade the duel which he had himself provoked, that he applied to the celebrated Balthasar Castiglione, the author of *Il Cortegiano*, to become his second; and, in order to induce his compliance, forwarded to him a copy of the treaty of Madrid, to convince him of the justice of his cause.

The precaution was, however, unnecessary; for, from some cause of which even the panegyrists of Francis can give no explanation, every expedient that could be invented to delay the progress of the imperial herald was resorted to. He was detained at Fontarabia by the non-arrival of his safe-conduct; the governor of Bayonne, after having inquired whether he were the bearer of the emperor's reply to the cartel of the king, and authorized to name the place of meeting, and received an affirmative answer, affected to suspect that his mission had some ulterior object, and refused to furnish him with a passport until he should receive an order to that effect from the sovereign.

Burgundy (the herald) had reached Fontarabia on the 31st of June, and was detained there upon the most frivolous pretexts until the 17th of August, when his safe-conduct was at length delivered to him, accompanied by an autograph letter, in which Francis reproved the governor for having impeded his entrance into France. Once furnished with this important document, Burgundy lost no time in journeying to Etampes, which he reached on the 7th of September; but on his arrival there he was met by Guienne, who informed him that the king was hunting at Montfort d'Amaury, and that he had received an order to conduct him to Longjumeau, where he would be apprised of the day upon which the monarch would receive his message.

At Longjumeau he was again detained for several days, until, becoming indignant at the contemptuous neglect shown to his imperial master, he insisted upon proceeding forthwith to the capital, whither Francis had removed. He accordingly set forth, still accompanied by the French herald; but on arriving at the gates of the city, Guienne insisted upon his removing the tabard which he wore, and on which were blazoned the arms of the province of Burgundy. The imperial herald, however, peremptorily refused to make any such concession, declaring that it involved the dignity of his sovereign, who claimed the said province as a portion of his territories; upon which Guienne skilfully attempted to excite his fears, by declaring that his personal safety was involved in an exhibition which would be regarded by the populace as a premeditated insult alike to the king and to the nation.

To this representation Burgundy haughtily replied, that he was ready to incur any danger which might ensue; and as the French herald soon became convinced that further opposition would be useless, the imperial envoy was at length permitted to enter the city in his official garb, and at once conducted to the presence of the king, who had assembled about him in the hall of the palace all the princes of the blood, the prelates, and the great officers of state.

A cloud was on the brow of Francis, and a red spot had risen to his cheek which betrayed his irritation; nor did he suffer the herald to complete his obeisance, ere he haughtily demanded if he were come to fix the place of combat.

"Sire;" was the respectful but firm rejoinder; "I entreat your majesty to permit me to perform the duties of my office, and to deliver the message with which I have been entrusted by my imperial master."

"I will hear nothing, Sir, until you have replied to my question;" exclaimed the king vehemently. "Give me the letter of the emperor, and then you may harangue as long as you see fit to do so."

"Sire;" said Burgundy, with a composure which only tended to increase the violence of Francis; "my orders were first to read the cartel, and afterwards to deliver it." And, unfolding the letter as he spoke, he commenced in a loud firm tone—"His Most Sacred Majesty"—but he was not suffered to proceed further: the passion of the king could no longer be controlled, and springing from his seat, he struck his hand violently upon the hilt of his dagger, as he shouted in an imperious

tone—"How now, Sir? Does your master seek to prescribe new laws to me in my own kingdom, and to introduce new customs at my court? Is this some fresh trick of his cunning? Give me the cartel, or leave the presence as you came. I will not listen to another sentence until you have declared the place of combat."

Alarmed by the intemperate bearing of the king, Montmorenci made an effort to calm his anger, but he was instantly silenced; upon which Burgundy respectfully requested that as his majesty declined to afford him an opportunity of fulfilling his mission, he might receive that refusal in writing, and a passport to Spain.

"Let both be furnished to him forthwith;" was the immediate retort of Francis, as he turned away; and after a second obeisance, more deliberate and more profound than that which he had made upon his entrance, the imperial herald withdrew.

Two days afterwards he received his safe-conduct, and a document which purported to be a report of the interview; but which on perusal he declined to accept, declaring that it conveyed no impression of the violent conduct of the king, and that his own replies had been garbled. As no attention was, however, paid to his objections, he left Paris on the 16th of September, and returned to Spain to report to Charles V. the issue of his mission.

Thus absurdly terminated an affair which had excited the attention and anxiety of all Europe; and in which it will be at once apparent that the King of France had forfeited all claim to his pretensions as the most chivalric monarch of Christendom. That he was constitutionally

brave there can be no doubt, but it is nevertheless certain that many a gallant soldier would make but a sorry duellist; and that in provoking a personal conflict Francis had miscalculated his own strength. A dangerous example had, meanwhile, been afforded to the more hot-headed of the nobility, who thenceforth began to decide all their differences by single combat; a pernicious fashion, which obtained so greatly throughout France, that even the edicts which were during several subsequent reigns fulminated against it, failed to effect its suppression; while it spread by degrees over the whole of Europe, and has not to the present day ceased to be recognised, although the strong arm of ridicule has, in a great degree, robbed it of its *prestige*.

Charles, on his side, made no efforts to revenge the affront offered to himself in the person of his herald, but quietly suffered the whole proceeding to fall into oblivion; nor did either of the hostile sovereigns, confirmed as their hatred had now become, display any increase of vigour in their warlike operations.

Lautrec, despite the jealousy of the Italian states, had been eminently successful in the Milanese, and had, by his interference, compelled the emperor into a capitulation with the pope, who, after making sundry concessions, again saw himself at liberty, and took up his abode at Orvieto, where he once more offered his services as mediator between the belligerent parties; while the Count de St. Pol after retaking Pavia, was suddenly paralysed in his operations, as all the former generals of Francis had previously been, by the failure of supplies.

A still more important check was, moreover, given to the French arms by the alienation of Andrea Doria, who had so essentially served France throughout the wars, but who at length became indignant at the neglect and injustice by which he had been requited, and transferred his allegiance to the emperor. His first exploit against his late allies was the maritime defence and revictualling of Naples, which was besieged by Lautrec; in whose camp the plague was at that critical juncture making fearful ravages, thinning his ranks daily, and carrying off many of his ablest officers. As the Genoese galleys appeared in the bay, and he ascertained that they were commanded by his old friend and companion in arms, the maréchal was made painfully aware of the error committed by his sovereign in so wilfully disregarding the value of such an ally; but like a brave man he only redoubled his exertions; and even when himself attacked by the pestilence, persisted in visiting the hospitals, and encouraging the troops with assurances that their monarch would not suffer them to remain long exposed to such a complication of dangers without affording them help.

And Lautrec was sincere when he thus addressed them; for he believed firmly and loyally that Francis would never sacrifice, by a negligence at once heartless and impolitic, the advantages which had been so dearly earned; and strong in this conviction he refused to raise the siege, even when the increased virulence of the disease confined him to his bed. Still the plague decimated his troops, and still the promised reinforcements failed; when, amid the paroxysms of his agony,

suspecting that he was wilfully deceived by those about him, who declared that the epidemic had ceased its ravages, he privately questioned two of his pages, whose reluctance to reveal the truth he overcame by a threat that they should be scourged to death if they attempted to misrepresent it; and learned that the camp was one wide scene of terror and despair; that the water-springs had been poisoned, and that the grain was similarly infected which was brought in by the peasants.

Already debilitated by the fearful disease under which he was suffering, and overcome by the terrible tidings of the trembling youths, the maréchal clasped his hands upon his forehead for a moment, and then, uttering a deep groan, sank back, and instantly expired.

The fact was no sooner ascertained than the siege was raised; and the army, under the command of the Marquis de Saluzzo, retired to Averso; but, during the retreat, Pietro da Navarro was made prisoner, and Saluzzo himself so severely wounded that he was compelled to capitulate. All the fortresses which had been taken by the French in the Neapolitan territories were surrendered, and both Navarro and Saluzzo died of their wounds.

The Count de Saint Pol, in the spring of the following year, (1529,) was equally unfortunate in the Milanese; and after a protracted struggle, during which he narrowly escaped being taken by the enemy, his army was totally routed, and once more Italy was entirely evacuated by the French.

Europe was at this period weary of warfare. The several nations were exhausted by a struggle in which neither had triumphed. The treasury of the emperor

was as empty as that of his rival. Their subjects were alike crushed to the earth by taxation, and sickened by disappointment. Italy could no longer be made the granary whence each drew the necessary provisions for a large body of armed men, for years of extortion and tyranny had made her fertile plains desolate, and her prolific valleys barren; and both potentates were consequently compelled to maintain at least a semblance of peace, which afforded breathing time to their respective kingdoms.

The pope, satisfied that he could no longer anticipate any effectual aid from France, and aware that he was too weak to contend against the emperor without extraneous support, made proposals of peace, which were accepted by Charles V, and the treaty was ratified at Barcelona on the 29th of June; while Francis, whose recent discomfiture in Italy had convinced him that he must fail in an attempt to liberate his sons by force of arms, no sooner ascertained the existence of this treaty than he resolved, if possible, to effect his object by more pacific measures; and, accordingly, entered into negotiations, by which it was subsequently determined that Louise de Savoie on his own part, and Marguerite d'Autriche on that of the emperor, should meet at Cambray, and arrange the conditions upon which the French princes were to obtain their release. The 7th of July was the day appointed for the meeting of the two princesses, who, by the marriage of the Governante of the Low Countries (then a widow) with Philibert II, Duke of Savoy, had become sisters-in-law.

Each of the female diplomatists was fully equal to the task which had thus devolved upon her. The duchess-

mother had, since the accession of her son, been the actual sovereign of France, and could act without fear of contradiction or dissent, whatever might be the measures which she saw fit to adopt; while Marguerite, who, as it may be remembered, had been educated at the French court, and betrothed to Charles VIII, was not only a woman of extreme tact and intelligence, but was also well acquainted with the prejudices and feelings of the country which had so long been her home; and possessed the entire confidence of the emperor her cousin.

On their arrival at Cambray, the two princesses were lodged in contiguous houses; but not content with this arrangement, and anxious to confer together without interruption, they caused a communication to be opened between their respective dwellings, in order that they might meet at all hours without witnesses, or the irksome ceremonial attendant upon an official conference. The prudence and judgment of this measure soon became manifest, for, thus released from the conflicting arguments of interested individuals, they were enabled to effect a peace, which was, owing to their agency, known as *La Paix des Dames.* Equally anxious to effect their object, they made mutual concessions; and on the 5th of August the articles were drawn up and the treaty signed by both parties: the duchess-mother agreeing on the part of her son, that he should relinquish Artois and Flanders to the emperor; withdraw his claim to Italy; espouse without further delay the Queen Eleonora; and secure to their male issue the contested duchy of Burgundy. He was, moreover, to pay, as ransom-money for the young princes, the sum of two millions of golden crowns, and

to discharge the debt of the Emperor to England; as well as to reverse the attainder of the Duke de Bourbon; to authorize the succession of his heirs, and to reinstate in their possessions all the French subjects who had been involved in his rebellion; while Charles, on his part, was engaged to recognise the claim of Francis to the duchy of Burgundy, with the solitary exception of Charolois, which was to remain the property of Madame Marguerite, and was, after her demise, to become a life-tenure of the emperor, at whose death it was again to revert to the French crown.

The characters of the two contracting parties were strikingly exhibited in this treaty. In renouncing Italy no attempt was made on the part of Louise de Savoie to secure favourable terms for the states of Florence and Venice, which had during so long a period been the faithful allies of France; but on the contrary, she engaged that, within the space of four months, the former should swear allegiance to the emperor, and the latter make restitution of all the territory of which they had possessed themselves within the kingdom of Naples; or, in default of such restitution, be compelled by force of arms to fulfil the obligation. The interests of the Duke de Guel-dres were also abandoned, as well as those of Robert de la Mark; and, in fine, the king was pledged to desert all his allies upon his northern frontier, not even excepting Henri of Navarre, the husband of his sister. Thus, the brave men who had shared his dangers, and to whom he owed the success of many a well-fought field, were reck-lessly left to the mercy of the sovereign against whom they had so often appeared in arms; while Marguerite

d'Autriche refused to accede to every suggestion which threatened to involve the safety of the emperor's foreign adherents, and made the restitution of Bourbon's honour one of the salient features of the treaty.

Nor was the humiliation to which Francis was thus subjected confined to these ignoble concessions; for, after the publication of the treaty, when Montmorenci was despatched to the Spanish frontier with the money necessary to ransom the young princes, it was discovered that the Chancellor Duprat had further disgraced his royal master, by endeavouring to defraud the emperor both in the weight and value of the specie destined for that purpose. This false dealing was, however, at once detected, and the mortified and indignant maréchal found himself compelled to delay his errand until the deficiency was supplied.

The exchange was then effected precisely as that of Francis himself had previously been. From the Spanish bank of the Bidassoa the Queen of Portugal, accompanied by the dauphin and his brother, and attended by the Constable of Castile and her personal suite, embarked at the same moment that Montmorenci left the shore of Navarre with the sealed cases containing the treasure. The several parties then ascended the barge which was moored in the centre of the stream, where the queen, having taken leave of her escort, entered the boat which was awaiting her, and landed in France with the princes. M. de Montpezat was then despatched to inform the king of her arrival, who was awaiting the intelligence at Bordeaux, and who immediately set forth to meet her. The interview took place

in the convent of Verrières, near Mont-de-Marsan, where Francis, having briefly welcomed his betrothed wife, withdrew with his sons, in order that she might be enabled to prepare herself for their marriage, which was celebrated on the morrow an hour before dawn, with a haste and absence of all attempt at magnificence, strangely at variance with the usual habits of the French court.

At the close of the ceremony the royal bride was conducted to her litter, and the bridal train entered Bordeaux, whence they proceeded by Coignac, Amboise, and Blois, to St. Germain-en-Laye, where they sojourned during the necessary preparations for the coronation of the queen, and her solemn entry into the city of Paris; which events took place, the first on the 5th of March, at St. Denis, and the second on the 15th of the same month, when she at length received the honours due to her distinguished rank.

Once more the palace of the Tournelles and the villa of the Tuileries were loud with festivity. Banquets and tournaments succeeded each other by day, while balls and receptions occupied the night hours. The royal saloons blazed with jewels, and beamed with beauty; illuminated barges rode on the ripple of the Seine, and invisible musicians made one wide orchestra of the lamp-lit gardens; the citizens, delighted to find themselves once more in security, welcomed their new queen as the visible earnest of their safety; and the same nobles who had knelt in homage before the meek and sainted Claude were now equally assiduous in striving to obtain the smiles of her successor.

But even amid all the splendour by which she was surrounded, the queen could not conceal her melancholy. She had been deeply wounded by the nature of her reception in France, incompatible as it was with all the rumours which had reached her of the gallantry and magnificence of her enforced bridegroom; but, although stung by the indignity to which she had been subjected, she had felt little surprise; as even during his captivity at Madrid, Francis had exhibited towards her a marked coldness, that appeared intended to prepare her for the neglect to which she would be consigned after her marriage. Nor had her presentiment been unfounded; for although he never violated the respect due to her as Queen of France, his indifference was, even at this early period, so undisguised, and his levity so unrestrained, that she experienced a sense of desolation even when she formed the centre of a crowd. Still her Spanish pride upheld her; and if at times the tears swelled unbidden, she drove them back, and assumed a composure that she was far from feeling. But moments were not wanting in which all her indignation was aroused; and one of these occurred even in the midst of the festivities consequent upon her coronation.

At her first official reception she occupied the centre of the daïs, having the duchess-mother on her right hand, and the Queen of Navarre, who had come to France to welcome her, upon her left; while the king, who should have afforded her the support of his presence, was engaged in an animated conversation with Madame d'Etampes; who, stiff with brocade, and sparkling with jewels, was standing negligently near a window, and

turning at intervals a curious and almost contemptuous glance towards her new sovereign. At length, however, the name of the favourite was announced by the Mistress of the Household, and she advanced to the step of the daïs with the mien and deportment of an empress; but Eleonora had already comprehended her position, and outraged by an audacity for which she had been unprepared, instead of presenting her hand as the proud duchess knelt before her, she suddenly turned her head aside, and entered into conversation with the Queen of Navarre, leaving the arrogant beauty to retire at her leisure. For a moment even Anne de Pisseleu felt embarrassed; but she quickly recovered her self-possession; and as she rose slowly from her knee, she murmured in a tone sufficiently audible to reach the ear of the queen: "Ha! is it so? You disdain to offer me your hand. It is to be a trial of strength between us, and I accept the challenge. Your husband shall revenge me."

And that he did so there can exist no doubt; for his excessive passion for the artful favourite had blinded him to her vices. Already had she taught him that her love was to be retained only by an entire devotion; and even while he suffered her to become the arbiter of his own actions, she betrayed him with a recklessness as bold as it was degrading. Nothing, moreover, could satisfy her rapacity; and while distress, which amounted almost to famine, oppressed the lower classes of the citizens, she greedily seized upon every opportunity of enriching herself and aggrandizing her family.

It is curious to trace the extent to which she succeeded in effecting the latter object, and the digression will

QUEEN ELEANOR.

Wife of Francis 1st

ENGRAVED BY C. G CLEMENTS FROM A PORTRAIT PUBLISHED IN 1813

"ILLUSTRES FRANÇAIS DU 16me SIECLE."

accordingly be pardoned. Within a few years her maternal uncle, Antoine Sanguin, became the Abbot of Fleury-sur-Loire, Bishop of Orleans, a cardinal, and Archbishop of Toulouse; Charles, her elder brother, was made Abbot of Bourgueil and Bishop of Condom; Francis, the second, received the Abbey of Saint Corneille de Compiêgne, and the bishopric of Amiens; and William, the youngest, was elevated to the see of Pamiers. Nor were her sisters forgotten; two of them became the abbesses of wealthy convents, and the other three were married into the noble families of Barbançon-Cauny, Chabot-Jarnac, and Vertus. Numerous, also, were the cousins and distant connexions for whom she provided no less liberally; and as is ever the case with individuals suddenly aggrandized, their ramifications were ere long endless; nor did one of them, even although many were as we have shown in holy orders, hesitate for a moment to profit by her disgrace.

One merit must, however, be conceded to Anne de Pisseleu; and as throughout her whole career we have been unable to trace any other good quality which she possessed, it cannot be passed over in silence. Educated highly for the period, she loved study for its own sake, and afforded protection to men of letters; although it must be admitted that, wherever her passions or her vanity were brought into play, she abandoned them and their interests without hesitation or scruple. Nevertheless, it is certain that she co-operated, not only willingly, but even zealously, with the king in attracting to the court of France all the distinguished talent of Europe; and was moreover able to appreciate the excellence of

which it soon became the focus. But the ostentation with which she assumed to herself the attitude of a patroness was calculated to arouse the indignation of the queen, who witnessed with suppressed but deep displeasure this usurpation of her privileges.

It was not long, indeed, ere the unhappy Eleonora discovered that she was a mere cypher at her husband's court. It was true that when she was seen in public on the occasion of some gorgeous procession to St. Denis or Notre Dame, attired in velvet and cloth of gold, and sparkling with jewels, the delighted populace lustily shouted *Noel* for their stately queen; but this empty and boisterous homage was the only tribute offered to her exalted rank. The courtiers had little time beyond that exacted by the strict ceremonial of the court to spare to one so powerless; and as it had been the pleasure of her royal husband that she should dismiss the greater number of her Spanish attendants, her solitude was seldom invaded save by the young princes, the two elder of whom had become sincerely attached to her during their detention at Madrid; an affection which she returned with equal warmth. Of these the dauphin was her peculiar favourite; for, young as he was, his calm, self-possessed, and temperate disposition was almost Spanish in its character, and she never feared from him the wild and ungoverned sallies into which his younger brothers were occasionally betrayed.

Isolated as she was, however, Eleonora scorned to complain; and, although she ill brooked the insults to which she was daily subjected, she uttered no remonstrance. By slow degrees she withdrew herself from the

more public circles of the court, and, as the unhappy Claude, her predecessor, had previously done, she sought in works of piety to stifle the murmurs of her heart. Often as she sat at her open casement she watched with swimming eyes the gorgeous litter of the favourite, with its draperies of pale blue velvet, and its train of pages, as it issued from the palace gates with almost regal pomp; but not even to her mother-in-law, who, from motives of policy, treated her with a courtesy for which she was in a great degree indebted to the fact of her utter powerlessness to thwart her measures, or to undermine her influence, did she venture to complain of the insolence under which she writhed.

CHAPTER VII.

[1530-31.]

FRANCIS I. AND THE ROYAL COLLEGE—HE ESTABLISHES PROFESSORSHIPS—ILLUSTRIOUS SCHOLARS—DUPRAT DISSUADES THE KING FROM FOUNDING THE COLLEGE—THE JEALOUSY OF FRANCIS IS EXCITED BY THE PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION—JEAN LE CLERC IS BURNT ALIVE AT MEAUX FOR HERESY—AN EFFIGY OF THE VIRGIN IS DESECRATED AT PARIS—SUPERSTITION OF FRANCIS I.—THE SILVER IMAGE—A REGAL PROCESSION—THE KING PERSECUTES THE LUTHERANS—LOUIS DE BERQUIN IS BURNT ALIVE IN THE PLACE DE GRÈVE—THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIBUNALS JUDGE AND CONDEMN THE PROTESTANTS—THE QUEEN OF NAVARRE INTERCEDES IN VAIN FOR THE VICTIMS—CRUELTY OF FRANCIS I.—SYMPTOMS OF RENEWED HOSTILITIES—MEETING BETWEEN THE POPE AND THE EMPEROR—THEY CONCLUDE A TREATY—CHARLES V. RESTORES THE MILANESE TO FRANCISCO SFORZA—INDIGNATION OF FRANCIS—TERROR OF THE FRENCH QUEEN—ELEONORA INVITES A NOBLEMAN OF HER BROTHER'S COURT TO FRANCE—AN INTERVIEW IS ARRANGED BETWEEN THE EMPEROR AND FRANCIS—DEATH OF LOUISE DE SAVOIE—HER TREASURE-CHEST—THE FRENCH KING LIBERATES THE TERRITORIES OF THE LOW COUNTRIES—DEATH OF MARGUERITE D'AUTRICHE—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCESSES.

CHAPTER VII.

[1530-31.]

THE pacification of Europe once more enabled Francis I. to turn his attention to the internal economy of his kingdom, and to revert to his original project of establishing a royal college; for which purpose he invited to his court the most learned men of the age, to whom he offered the several professorships, with each a magnificent stipend. In addition to the eminent scholars to whom we have elsewhere alluded, a number of the Italian literati, who had been proscribed by the emperor for the share which they had taken in the late wars, found a ready and an honourable refuge under his protection. Among these illustrious exiles was Luigi Alamanni,[1] a Florentine poet, who soon became so great a favourite of the king as to be not only admitted to his intimacy, but

[1] Luigi Alamanni was born in 1493. Having entered into a conspiracy against Julio de' Medici, subsequently Clement VII, he took refuge in France. Henry II. continued to him the same protection and favour which he had experienced from Francis I. He left behind him a collection of poems, a didactic poem entitled *Opere Toscane*, the *Cultivazione*, *Girone il Cortese* a heroic poem, and the *Avarchide* a Florian comedy. He died in 1556.

even employed upon several embassies; Bruto, the Florentine historian; Niccolo dell'Abbate; and Rosso del Rosso,[1] who, in conjunction with Primaticcio, executed the paintings and statues of the palace of Fontainebleau; Tagliacarno, who became the preceptor of his sons, and upon whom he bestowed the bishopric of Grasse; and a number of other celebrated scholars, as well as a crowd of capitalists, merchants, and craftsmen, who established themselves in France, and exercised in their adopted country those talents to which her manufactories have since been indebted for their superiority.

Nor was it only to foreigners that Francis proved himself a munificent patron; for, excited by the encouragement suddenly held out throughout Europe to every species of science and scholarship, and anxious to secure the success of his new foundation by placing it under the supervision of the most learned men of the time, he spared no pains in collecting about him, and in conciliating the friendship of, every individual in France who

[1] Rosso del Rosso, familiarly known as Maître-Roux, was born at Florence, in 1496; and by the mere strength of his genius, and his close study of Michael Angelo and Parmesan *(Mazzuoli)*, became one of the most famous painters of his time. The grand gallery of Fontainebleau was built after his designs, which were rewarded by Francis I. with a canonry at Notre Dame. His great success at the court of France created a dissension between himself and Primaticcio, who was jealous of the favour shown to him by the king; and this hatred continued unabated until the death of Rosso, who poisoned himself in the year 1541, from remorse at the torments endured by his friend Pelligrino, whom he had unjustly accused of theft. Great skill in the management of his lights, grandeur of conception, fertility of imagination, and remarkable richness of colouring, are the characteristics of his style.

had by his erudition rendered himself worthy of such a distinction.

Francis was not, however, singular in this laudable ambition, for all Europe, wearied of war, had simultaneously adopted the same taste. In Italy, even the political convulsions to which the country had been subjected, had failed to quench the thirst for knowledge; and thus her scholars, her artists, her sculptors, and her architects were the most celebrated in the world, and were competent to teach where others were only beginning to learn. In Florence especially, every species of art and every branch of literature had attained to marvellous perfection; and now, when diplomacy and warfare had ceased to engross the minds of the European sovereigns, each became desirous to render his court celebrated by the presence of the learned. England, France, and Germany, at length aware of the importance of intellectual cultivation, vied with each other in their efforts to accomplish this desirable end; and thus the painter's easel, the scholar's desk, and the sculptor's studio were soon established within the walls of palaces, hitherto inaccessible to such occupants.

Fortunately for Francis, the Italian refugees with few exceptions turned towards France, of which they had so long been the allies; while even in his own kingdom he possessed many men of eminence, to whom he had shown favour from the very commencement of his reign. Foremost among these were the three noble brothers, Du Bellay,[1] Budé, Guillaume Petit, his con-

[1] The family of Du Bellay, which produced alike brave soldiers and able diplomatists, were natives of Anjou. The most famous of

fessor, Cope, his physician, Duchâtel, Pillicier, Danès, De Selve, and many other men of mark, who soon obtained for him the reputation which he coveted.

It was principally to encourage the study of the classics that Francis had conceived the idea of the royal college, of which it may be remembered that he had offered the presidency to Erasmus so early as the year 1517; but, notwithstanding his great anxiety to cultivate this essential branch of knowledge, he had contented himself with selecting the site of the building, which was to be sufficiently capacious to accommodate six hundred students, and then suffered himself to be dissuaded by the remonstrances of the chancellor Duprat, who being a man totally without erudition, and consequently unable to appreciate its value, represented to him the impolicy of diverting the public monies from their legitimate uses in order to foster a love of enlightenment which might tend to interfere with higher objects.

It is probable that this narrow-sighted view of the case was not without its effect upon the mind of the king; for even in 1530, the period upon which we are now engaged, Francis, after having elected the several professors, left them dependent upon the University, without either a hall of study, a corporation, or even any security for the payment of their salary; nor was the

its members were the three brothers, Guillaume Du Bellay, one of the generals of Francis I, who died in 1565; Jean Du Bellay, who died in 1560; and Martin Du Bellay, who at his death, which occurred in 1559, left behind him his celebrated Memoirs. A relative of these distinguished men, Joachim Du Bellay, acquired great reputation as a poet.

erection of the edifice even commenced until eight years after his death.

That the insinuation of the crafty Duprat had not failed in its effect is moreover made apparent by the sudden distaste evinced by the king to his darling project, so soon as he discovered that as the study of the ancient languages obtained among the learned, so did the tenets of reform gain ground, and the exasperation of the monks become uncontrollable.

For a time, however, he continued to exhibit the same friendship for the studious and the scientific as ever; and refused to abandon their interests at the instigation of the sensual and indolent communities who suddenly beheld all their darling prejudices threatened, and all their ignorance revealed, by the new flood of light which was pouring in upon them; and whose only resource was to raise the cry of heresy, and to fulminate alike against the reformed scholars and their protectors all the thunders of the church.

The truth, nevertheless, made way; and the same opinions which only twelve years before had been promulgated in Germany, spread themselves steadily over France, and became widely diffused among that portion of the people, perhaps of all others the best calculated to insure their ultimate triumph. We allude to the lower classes—not only of the cities, where the mere desire to free themselves from a priestly thraldom of which they had become weary, doubtlessly urged many to espouse the new doctrines—but also of the villages; for the purity, the peace, and the simplicity of the reformed tenets spoke to the hearts and the convictions of those

whose reason had been bewildered, and whose faith had been enfeebled, by the mysterious superstitions of their fathers. And while the good work was thus progressing among the humble and the unlearned, it made itself felt also among the more intelligent of the citizens, who could not remain blind to the vices and excesses of a depraved and grasping priesthood, whose habits of life, and whose modes of teaching, were alike repugnant to good sense and good feeling.

No wonder then, that when the learned began to examine and to compare the two systems, a general alarm pervaded the whole body of the Romish church; for although many of them still remained within the pale of their original religion, yet all, without exception, expressed an equal disgust at the ignorance and imposture of the monks. Among the number of those who still nominally adhered to their ancient faith, while they were, in point of fact, rapidly undermining its foundations, may be mentioned the celebrated Rabelais;[1] who, after having abandoned a monastic life for the profession of medicine, became the physician of the Cardinal du Bellay during his sojourn at Rome as the ambassador of Francis; and published in the year 1533 his novel of

[1] François Rabelais was born at Chinon in 1483. Originally a monk of the order of the Cordeliers, he subsequently became a Benedictine; and then, weary of the cowl, established himself as a physician; in which capacity he accompanied the embassy of the Cardinal du Bellay to Rome. During his sojourn in that city, he obtained, through the intercession of the cardinal, an absolution from the pope for the rupture of his vows; and it was to the same generous patron he was indebted for the clerical preferment which he afterwards enjoyed.

"Pantagruel," and in 1535 that of "Gargantua," in both of which he attacked with unequalled audacity alike the religion that he professed and the civil authority to which he was subservient. But while he thus overwhelmed, with a pungency of ridicule at once impious and indecent, the abuses to which no one was more keenly alive than himself, he was nevertheless too worldly-wise to withdraw from beyond the pale of a church which he was enabled to render subservient to his interests; and despite all his offences against religion and morality, he ultimately died prebendary of Saint Maur-des-Fossés, and curate of Meudon.

In like manner Clement Marot, the poet, although he rejected for a time the Romish tenets, did not hesitate on two distinct occasions to return to them; not, as in the case of Rabelais, from motives of self-interest, but from causes still more degrading; for even while, in his first enthusiasm for the reformed faith, he abandoned the composition of worldly poetry in order to translate the Psalms, he could not, or sought not to control the licentiousness of his nature; and finding the restraints imposed by his adopted creed alike inconvenient and embarrassing, unblushingly recurred to his old professions in order to pursue the libertine habits to which he was addicted. Erasmus, although less reprehensible in his motives, was equally inconsistent in his conduct; for while he pursued the Romish clergy with unsparing sarcasm, he refused to abandon the observances of their church.

Many there were, however, who having conscientiously and sincerely attached themselves to Protestantism, were true even to the death, and sealed their convictions

by enduring with unflinching and heroic firmness the agonies of martyrdom.

Among those observances of the Romish church against which the people had first openly revolted was that of image-worship; and so early as the year 1525, a woolcomber, named Jean le Clerc, a native of Meaux, had carried his zeal so far as to destroy several figures of saints; for which sacrilegious offence he was publicly whipped, branded with a hot iron, and subsequently burned at the stake. This event however created little sensation beyond the city in which it occurred; nor was it until in 1528 a discovery was made in the capital that an effigy of the Virgin in the Rue des Rosiers had been torn from its niche, defaced, and dragged through the mud of the street, that Francis abandoned the cause of the Reformers.

But even then it was rather from policy, than from any religious scruple, that he did so. The state of Paris had already been, as we have shown, sufficiently alarming; and this new and open violation of the law threatened an increase of the evil. Jealous of his authority, the king began to regard the Lutherans with a suspicious eye; and while he had tranquilly permitted their attacks upon the church, he at once resented their presumed defiance of himself. Moreover, Francis, although destitute of religion, was as superstitious as the most ignorant of his subjects. Like them he had witnessed rather with satisfaction than annoyance the persecutions to which the clergy had been subjected by their new opponents, but, also like them, he held in reverence the ancient symbols of the faith which he professed; and thus, in order at once to appease

the murmurs of the populace, and to tranquillize his own misgivings, he caused a statue of silver of the same dimensions as that which had been destroyed to be erected in the same spot, and himself walked in procession, attended by his whole court, to witness the ceremony of its installation.

His next care was to discover the authors of the outrage; but failing in this attempt, he turned the whole tide of his wrath upon the Lutherans as a body, declaring that the profanation which had been committed must have originated with them; and the first evidence which he gave of his determination to sacrifice every other consideration to that of maintaining his personal authority, was afforded by the re-arrest of Louis de Berguin,[1] who had some time previously been denounced to the Sorbonne by their syndic, and imprisoned in the dungeons of the college; whence he had been liberated by the express order of the king, and restored to liberty.

Now, however, although no further accusation had been brought against him, the unhappy student was once more consigned to a prison, and put upon his trial before twelve commissaries of the parliament, who, anxious to conciliate at once the church and the sovereign, after a hurried investigation condemned him to witness the public burning of all his writings in the Place de Grève; to make the *amende honorable*, to abjure his heretical

[1] Louis de Berguin was a gentleman of Artois, and the friend of Erasmus. Of eminent talents, and zealous for the progress of learning, he wrote vehemently and powerfully against the cupidity, ignorance, and intolerance of the monastic communities, and thus drew upon himself the vengeance of the Romish church. He was burnt at the stake in his fortieth year, in 1529.

opinions on the same spot, and afterwards to have his tongue pierced by a hot iron, and to suffer perpetual imprisonment. Without comment upon the remainder of his sentence, Berguin positively refused to utter the abjuration, and forthwith appealed both to the king and the pope; upon which the commissaries, by an abuse of power alike unprecedented and arbitrary, denounced his appeal as a new offence, and revoking their former award, condemned him to be burnt alive; an iniquitous sentence which was actually carried into effect on the 22d of April, 1529, without any effort on the part of Francis to save the victim from so cruel and unmerited a fate.

The death of Berguin was succeeded by a general persecution of the Reformists. At Toulouse the tribunal of the Inquisition condemned no less than thirty-two Lutherans to punishments of different degrees of severity; including imprisonment for life, confiscation of property, and death at the stake. At Lyons they were treated with equal harshness; while at Bourges they were judged and sentenced with similar severity, and even confounded with sorcerers and magicians in order to excite against them the indignation and hatred of the populace; and at the same time the chancellor convened a council in the capital, which included all the bishops of the diocese of Sens, in which the doctrines of Luther were not only condemned, but all the princes of Christendom were exhorted to assist in the extermination of his disciples.

Neither genius nor scholarship longer availed to save the suspected; and Francis, who had so recently arrogated to himself the proud title of Protector of Letters, looked coldly on while some of the noblest spirits and

brightest intellects of his kingdom were quenched in the unholy flames of bigotry and superstition.

In vain had Marguerite of Navarre pleaded for mercy; in vain had she represented the irreparable injury which the king was inflicting, not only upon Europe at large by thus impeding the growth of knowledge, but even upon his own fame, by affording his sanction to enormities so monstrous; her warning whispers were silenced by the sterner voice of Louise de Savoie; who, having by a transition rapid and easy at that period abandoned her former licentious pursuits for a violent and ostentatious display of religious fervour, and resolved to second the selfish designs of her favourite and confidant, Duprat, (who on his side was eager to conciliate the clergy, and to purchase oblivion for the excesses of the past,) urged him on to acts of rigour and injustice as impolitic as they were cruel.

Such was the real patronage afforded by Francis I. to men of letters: alternately his idols and his victims, he suffered them to minister to his vanity, to celebrate his greatness, to record his victories, and to throw a halo of refinement and civilization over his court; while they were not only forbidden to worship the Eternal and the True according to the dictates of their own hearts, but were even subjected to the most odious persecution, and to the most painful and ignominious death, for presuming to eschew bigotry and error, and to work out the salvation of their own souls.

In the darker ages king Robert had indeed punished religious schism by the stake, and Saint Louis had followed the fearful example of his predecessor; but since

the death of the latter monarch, the law, although still unannulled, had never been put into force, and was forgotten when it was thus revived by Francis I. Even his panegyrist Brantôme is compelled to admit that "it was he who first led the way to the burning of heretics." A melancholy fact to record against a christian king; and one, moreover, who affected an earnest zeal to promote civilization and general enlightenment.

Meanwhile the tranquillity of Europe was far from being so well assured as it appeared; and although the late lingering and costly wars had exhausted the resources of both Charles V. and Francis, there were many reasons which co-operated against a lengthened peace. To say nothing of the mutual jealousy that existed between the two monarchs, each had legitimate causes for discontent which neither was likely to overlook; nor were there wanting bold and adventurous spirits about the persons of both sovereigns, who sought to fan the smouldering embers of their old hatred into a new and fiercer flame.

To the emperor it was represented that Francis, whose pride he had humbled, and whose vanity he had wounded, would never forgive the humiliations entailed upon him by the treaty of Cambray; but would eagerly seize the first opportunity to recover by violence the territories of which he had been deprived; and that should he succeed in once more rendering himself master of the Milanese, he would not fail to extend his conquests to Naples and Sicily. In order to avert this calamity it was suggested by the counsellors of Charles that he should invest Francisco Sforza with the duchy of Milan, by which measure he would not only secure to himself a large

amount of money, but would also conciliate the other Italian states, who would necessarily welcome this restoration as a guarantee against the invasion of a monarch of whom past experience had rendered them suspicious, and even against the authority of the emperor himself, whose power was too formidable and overwhelming to admit of their feeling secure under his rule; while by inducing the other princes of Italy to enter into a league with Sforza, of whom they could entertain no jealousy, he would become possessed of allies all the more valuable that they were thus divorced from the cause of France.

Many other similar arguments were adduced which were not without their influence upon the mind of Charles V, who had already been urged to reinstate Sforza in the sovereignty of the duchy alike by the pope and the Venetian senate. Shortly after the peace he had visited Italy with great pomp, and effected his reconciliation with the pontiff, towards whom he had evinced a respect and regard which were wholly incompatible with his former bearing; and who met him in the same spirit, being anxious to secure the support of so powerful an ally in his meditated vengeance upon the Florentines, by whom the Medici, his relatives, and all their adherents had been driven from their territories.

The re-establishment of his family was accordingly one of the principal articles of the treaty between the two potentates insisted upon by the pope. Alessandro de' Medici was to be reinstated in the government of Florence; Ravenna, Modena, and Reggio were to be restored to the holy see; and the emperor was pledged not only to assist Clement against the Duke of Ferrara,

but also to aid him in restoring the power and splendour of the church, which had been greatly weakened and deteriorated by the events of the late war; as well as in checking the progress of the Reformation.

The recompense of these concessions was to be the crown of empire which had been refused to Charles by his predecessor; and the treaty was no sooner concluded than his coronation took place with great splendour (on the 22d of February, 1530,) in the church of San Petronio at Bologna. After the ceremony, the emperor proceeded with the same magnificence to Barcelona, where he embarked for Genoa; and in the latter city he received the congratulations of the papal legates, and the representatives of the several Italian princes. He then pursued his way to Placenza, where he gave audience to Francisco Sforza, and fulfilled his promise to the pontiff by insuring to the duke the restoration of his duchy, on condition that he should pay the sum of nine hundred thousand ducats as compensation money, and leave the fortresses of Milan and Cremona in the hands of the imperial generals until the whole of the debt should be discharged. In order to secure the fidelity of his new vassal, Charles moreover promised him the hand of his own niece, the daughter of the King of Denmark, who had been deprived of his kingdom; and a few months subsequently the marriage was solemnized.

Thus it will be seen that Francis had tangible cause for displeasure. The emperor had entered into two several treaties, both of which seriously affected the interests of France. He had secured the alliance of the pope, the Venetian states, the Italian provinces, and,

above all, the Milanese; and he had also, through his agents, tampered with the Swiss and the Grisons, and weakened their allegiance to the French crown.

But of all these injuries, that which rankled the most deeply in the heart of Francis was the cession of Milan to Francisco Sforza, a man without honour or probity, and of mean extraction; while he was himself the husband of the emperor's sister, the monarch of a powerful nation, and, as Charles was well aware, coveted the possession of that duchy, which he considered as a portion of his own territories. Had the emperor retained the Milanese under his own authority, the French king could only have complained of his injustice in thus withholding from his children their legitimate inheritance; but in thus transferring its sovereignty to a petty Italian prince, he had subjected Francis to the greatest indignity which it was in his power to inflict; and which wounded him the more deeply that he had been totally unprepared for so wanton and gratuitous an insult.

Nor was this the only evidence afforded by Charles of the indifference with which he regarded the claims of the French crown; for he had, in like manner, ceded the countyship of Ast to the Duke of Savoy, although aware that it was the ancient patrimony of the house of Orleans; while in addition to these glaring demonstrations of his contempt for the weakened power of his late prisoner, he had failed to redeem the pledge that he had given for the restoration of several of the attendants of the young princes during their detention at Madrid, whom he had sent to the galleys, and who still remained prisoners.

Yet, despite all these provocations, Francis was anxious to avoid a renewal of hostilities, and once more sought to avert aggression by diplomacy; an attempt in which he was encouraged both by Louise de Savoie, whose health at this period began to fail, and by the queen, who was overwhelmed with terror at the prospect of a war between her husband and her brother. It was consequently arranged that Eleonora should request the presence of Courbaron, a gentleman of the emperor's court, in France, ostensibly to conclude a commercial treaty between the French and the Genoese; but actually, through her influence, to induce a meeting between the two sovereigns.

After repeated interviews Courbaron accepted the mission, and the emperor affected to accede to the solicitations of his sister; but it soon became evident that he had no intention of affording to Francis the advantage of a personal interview; a fact of which the French king felt so well assured that he availed himself of the death of his mother, which occurred during the progress of the negotiations, to suggest the postponement of the meeting.

In the spring of the year 1531 the health of Madame d'Angoulême had become extremely precarious, and some cases of plague having occurred during the summer at Fontainebleau, where she was then residing, she determined to proceed to Romorantin; but on her arrival at the village of Gretz in Gratinois, her illness increased so alarmingly that she was compelled to abandon all idea of her projected journey, and to summon her physicians. A short time before her death she was startled by an extraordinary light in her chamber, and

reprimanded her attendants for their carelessness in making so large a fire; when they assured her that what she saw was merely the reflection of the moon through the curtained window. Still unconvinced, she desired that the hangings might be drawn aside, and on raising herself upon her bed to ascertain the truth, she discovered that the glare by which she had been inconvenienced proceeded from a comet which was at that moment traversing the heavens. As she gazed wildly upon the brilliant meteor, she fell back despairingly upon her pillow, declaring that it was the harbinger of her death, and desiring that her confessor might be immediately introduced. In vain did her physicians expostulate, assuring her that the virulence of her disease had abated, and that they had confidence in her recovery; they could not shake her conviction, or overcome the superstition by which she was prostrated. The confessor accordingly approached her bed, and administered to her the last sacraments of the church; a few hours of calm succeeded, and then, towards evening on the 29th of September, she expired, in her fifty-fourth year.

The embalmed body was conveyed to St. Denis, where it was laid in a superb mausoleum which the king had caused to be constructed; the heart and the entrails were carried to Notre Dame, and deposited under a plate of metal; and all that remained of Louise de Savoie, so long the sovereign of France in all save the mere name, were the treasures which she had accumulated during her career of power. But what a fearful tale did they tell of extortion, injustice, and selfishness! The

Milanese had been lost for want of supplies: the energies of a whole army paralysed; the blood of thousands sacrificed; the dignity of her son insulted; and the nation prostrated by famine; and her private chest was found to contain the enormous sum of fifteen hundred thousand golden crowns! The captivity of Francis had been her work, but she had forgotten while gloating over her ill-gotten hoards that she was a mother. The victims of the sword and the pestilence had alike been the offerings which she had accumulated at the altar of her sordid deity; avarice and hatred had enabled her to do the office of the destroying angel, and she had heaped up curses where she might have garnered blessings.

At the death of his mother Francis found himself more wealthy than he had ever been since his accession to the throne; and one of the first uses to which he applied a portion of his unexpected inheritance, was to liberate the territories of the Low Countries, which had been mortgaged to the emperor in part payment of his ransom.

In the brief period which had elapsed since the conclusion of the treaty of Cambray, Louise de Savoie had already been preceded to the tomb by Marguerite d'Autriche, the Governante of Flanders, who died at Malines on the 1st of December in the previous year, only fifteen months after the completion of that unhappy and ill-omened negotiation.

The daughter of Maximilian left no treasure with which to enrich her heirs, but tears were wept above her bier that gold could not have bought; and her memory was embalmed in the hearts of those to whom she had been alike a firm friend and an indulgent protectress.

CHAPTER VIII.

[1532.]

FRANCIS ENDEAVOURS TO ANNEX THE DUCHY OF BRITTANY TO THE FRENCH CROWN—THE BRETONS RESIST HIS CLAIM—LOUIS DES DESSERTS UNDERTAKES TO SECURE THEIR CONSENT—THE STATES OF BRITTANY ARE ASSEMBLED AT VANNES—FRANCIS PROCEEDS TO CHÂTEAUBRIAND—RECONCILIATION OF THE COUNT AND COUNTESS—FRANCIS PRESENTS TWO ESTATES TO HIS OLD FAVOURITE—THE DAUPHIN IS PROCLAIMED DUKE OF BRITTANY—FRANCIS ERECTS NEW PALACES—THE CHÂTEAU OF MADRID—THE QUEEN-DOWAGER OF HUNGARY IS APPOINTED GOVERNANTE OF THE LOW COUNTRIES—HENRY VIII. AND FRANCIS I. ENTER INTO A DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE—CLEMENT VII. REFUSES TO SANCTION THE DIVORCE OF HENRY VIII. AND KATHERINE OF ARAGON—UNPOPULARITY OF HENRY VIII.—DIET OF SPIRES—FERDINAND OF AUSTRIA IS ELECTED KING OF THE ROMANS—CONTEMPT EVINCED BY CHARLES V. TOWARDS THE GERMAN PROTESTANTS—THE LEAGUE OF SMALKALDEN—THE PROTESTANT PRINCES APPLY TO FRANCE AND ENGLAND FOR SUPPORT—COURTEOUS REPLY OF FRANCIS—THE KING OF HUNGARY SENDS AMBASSADORS TO THE FRENCH COURT—POLICY OF FRANCIS—THE FRENCH AMBASSADORS TO ENGLAND NEGOTIATE A MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO MONARCHS—THE ROYAL INTERVIEW—A TREATY IS SIGNED BY WHICH BOTH SOVEREIGNS BIND THEMSELVES TO A CRUSADE AGAINST THE TURKS—INDIGNATION OF HENRY VIII. AGAINST THE POPE—CAUTION OF THE FRENCH KING—JEALOUSY OF CHARLES V.—FRANCIS IS SUMMONED BY THE EMPEROR TO DESPATCH AN ARMY AGAINST SOLYMAN—HE REFUSES—CHARLES V. COMPELS THE TURKS TO RETREAT—FRANCIS DECEIVES HENRY VIII.—FRANCIS OFFERS THE HAND OF THE DUKE D'ORLEANS TO CATHERINE DE' MEDICI—INCREDULITY OF THE POPE—HE CONSULTS CHARLES V.—THE EMPEROR AND THE POPE MEET AT BOLOGNA—ALARM OF FRANCIS—TWO FRENCH BISHOPS ARE DESPATCHED TO THREATEN CLEMENT VII.—HENRY VIII. RETURNS TO ENGLAND.

CHAPTER VIII.

[1532.]

The persecution of the Reformists and the negotiation with the Emperor were not, however, the only subjects by which the mind of Francis was absorbed during the year 1532. One of the darling projects both of himself and his mother had for several years past been the annexation of the duchy of Brittany to the throne of France; to which they adhered still more stringently from the fact that Queen Claude had, by her will, devised it to her elder son, the dauphin, with the reservation of its revenues to the king her husband during his life. The legality of this will was nevertheless disputed by the Bretons, who affirmed that she had no right to make such a disposition, inasmuch as a clause in the marriage-contract of Anne de Bretagne distinctly set forth that it was to become the inheritance of the younger, instead of the elder of her children; and, jealous of their privileges, they demanded the maintenance of their independence, refusing to allow the king to govern them in any other capacity than that of their duke, and in conformity with their own constitution; reserving to

themselves, moreover, the right, should an opportunity present itself, of separating the duchy from the crown, either by causing it to devolve upon the last-born of the princes, or of maintaining the claims of the female line.

Francis, who foresaw that the attitude thus assumed by the Bretons might hereafter cause the province to become a fruitful subject of contention, was anxious to secure its tranquil possession; and to this end many suggestions had been made, the whole of which were successively abandoned, from a dread of awakening their alarm. But still, even although the advice and influence of Louise de Savoie were now lost to them, neither the king nor his minister was willing to abandon so essential a measure; and at length the wily Duprat succeeded in securing the confidence of Louis des Desserts, the president of the Breton Parliament, who possessed immense influence over the minds of his compatriots; and who, dazzled by the bribes and promises of the chancellor, consented to exert all his energies to induce the result at which he aimed.

Duprat had little difficulty in convincing the king of the absolute necessity of completing the arrangement during the minority of his sons; who, then aged respectively only thirteen and fourteen years, would not venture to interfere with any measures which he might see fit to adopt; while, should the affair remain in abeyance until they reached maturity, it might involve a conflicting interest dangerously antagonistic to his views; and should the younger prince be enabled to induce the Bretons to sustain his pretensions, would, in all probability, originate a civil war, or even foreign interference,

after his death,—a consideration to which Francis was no sooner aroused, than he gave the astute minister full powers to act in his name, and upon his authority, as he might deem best suited to insure success. Thus empowered, Duprat at once acquainted his royal master with the influence which he had obtained over Des Desserts; and as no better or more feasible alternative presented itself, it was resolved that his services should be secured at any cost. Nor did the Breton president disappoint the hopes that he had raised; for by his eloquence in representing the extreme peril to which the duchy was exposed by the perpetual wars that were devastating Italy, and the consequences entailed upon their own province, together with heavy bribes, and prospects of court favour to the most influential of the ducal nobles, he succeeded in prevailing upon the States themselves to propose their annexation to the king.

This object was no sooner attained than they were convened at Vannes (in August, 1532); while in order to receive their overtures more courteously, and to render himself popular in their immediate neighbourhood, Francis proceeded to the castle of the Count de Châteaubriand; who, having at length become reconciled to his erring wife, gave him such a welcome as was due to a sovereign from his subject; an act of loyalty for which the king royally repaid him, by presenting to his old favourite the valuable estates of Rhuis and Sucinio.

The result of the assembly was the proclamation of the dauphin as Duke of Brittany under the title of François III; and a declaration that thenceforward the duchy was irrevocably united to the French throne, with-

out retaining, upon any pretext, the power of future separation; but, in order still to preserve some shadow of the privileges which they had thus voluntarily resigned, letters-patent were previously drawn up, by which Francis bound himself to confirm all the ancient rights of the province, and guaranteed that no levy of specie should be made within its boundaries which had not been formally sanctioned by the States themselves.

The temporary peace enabled the king to pursue all his favourite avocations, among which that of building new palaces and embellishing old ones was conspicuous. Magnificent commencements were manifest at the Louvre; Fontainebleau was daily increasing in splendour; St. Germain was a favourite residence of majesty, and was enriched by many precious productions of art; the little château of La Muette, in its silent valley, had invaded one of the sweetest solitudes in nature; the hunting-seat of Chalnau, in the Gatinois, rose amid the stately and overarching trees of the forest; the graceful pavilion of Follembray, in Picardy, was the retreat of pleasure and intrigue; Chambord was truly regal alike in its dimensions and its decorations; Villars-Coteret was erected to indulge a caprice of Madame de Châteaubriand during her period of favour; and even the Bois de Boulogne, at the very gates of the capital, was embellished by an extraordinary edifice, to which Francis gave the name of the Château of Madrid.

The purpose of the king in building this eccentric retreat was never clearly defined; although it gave rise to much conflicting conjecture. Some of the old chroniclers affirm that it was constructed upon the model of the

castle to which he was transferred after his betrothal to Eleonora, and his removal from the Escurial; and that to this circumstance it owed its designation. The fallacy of this assertion is, however, easily proved, the whole aspect of the château discountenancing such an idea. It stood in the centre of an inclosed park, about two leagues in circumference, and was laden with ornaments. Statuary and pictures abounded within; while the whole of the exterior was incrusted with glazed and painted bricks, the work of the celebrated Bernard Palissis,[1] which produced an effect rather dazzling than regal. The building was in form a solid square mass; but it was so skilfully distributed within, that it presented several distinct sets of apartments, which rendered each of its occupants totally independent of the interference and surveillance of the other inhabitants. This circumstance gave rise to a second assertion, that the king had erected it, and afterwards bestowed upon it a name which could scarcely have been to him altogether devoid of certain

[1] Bernard Palissis, or Palissy, was born in the diocese of Agen, in 1500, of parents whose extreme poverty deprived him of all means of acquiring even the most slender education. He became a house-porter at Saintes, where he invented the art of enamelling earthen-ware, and moreover acquired, unaided, an amount of knowledge which soon drew upon him the attention of his townsmen. His fame having reached the ears of Francis I, he was invited to Paris, where he ultimately became Steward of the Tuileries. He was an ardent Reformist, and resisted all the efforts made by Henry III. for his conversion to the Romanist faith. He died in 1590, leaving behind him two remarkable works, which have now become extremely rare; *Le Moyen de devenir riche par l'Agriculture*, and *De la Nature des eaux et fontaines, des métaux, sels et salines, des pierres, des terres, du feu, et des émaux.*

distasteful associations, because in the entire privacy which it afforded it bore a striking resemblance to his Spanish prison. Others, again, averred that it was intended as an architectural sarcasm, or, as it might more properly have been called, an undignified and contemptible subterfuge of Francis; who, upon several occasions during his frequent visits to his suburban palace, when expatiating upon the pertinacity of the emperor in urging his return to Madrid in accordance with the pledge that he had given, was wont to say with a bitter smile: "His reproaches are alike unjustifiable and misplaced; for, on the faith of a gentleman, I am at Madrid at this very moment."

Meanwhile Charles V, feeling the necessity of appointing a successor to Marguerite d'Autriche, as Governante of the Low Countries, decided on conferring the vacant dignity upon his sister Mary, the widowed Queen of Hungary; and he accordingly proceeded to Flanders to effect her installation; but as he sojourned there for a greater length of time than such a ceremony appeared to demand; both Henry VIII. and Francis I. became alarmed, and on the 23d of June they concluded a treaty of mutual defence, and arranged the preliminaries for a personal interview towards the close of the same year, in order that they might severally decide upon such measures as should appear necessary to their own safety.

His mistrust of the intentions of the emperor did not, however, deter the English king from thwarting all the measures of the pope; and although he entered into a personal controversy with Luther, and even produced a work which obtained for him the title of

Defender of the Faith, he nevertheless had learnt in the course of his researches to entertain doubts of the papal infallibility; and he no sooner became convinced that Clement VII, at the persuasion of the emperor, had resolved definitively to refuse to sanction his divorce from Katherine of Aragon, than he openly denied it; although he nevertheless continued to persecute the Reformists. The arrest of Wolsey tended effectually to alienate the Romanist party from his interests; while the virulence with which he pursued the Lutherans made them also his enemies; and thus he became more than ever anxious to secure the alliance and friendship of the French king; who, although totally free from religious scruples, felt his dignity also offended by the pretensions of the pontiff to a supremacy which involved the rights of his own crown; and consequently, in order to widen the breach between Henry VIII. and the emperor, he advised him to make Anna Boleyn his wife without any reference to the assumed authority of the church.

Meanwhile Charles V. had completed the exasperation of the German Reformists, shortly after his return from Italy, by convening a diet at Spires, which he caused to be presided over by his brother Ferdinand, who had recently through his influence been elected King of the Romans; and at which a decree was passed insisting upon the observance of a former one made at Worms, and stringently enforcing the observance of the mass, and every other ceremonial of the church, until the pope should have held a formal council, and deliberated upon the final measures to be adopted. Upon the promulgation of this decree, the independent princes of Germany

had immediately assembled, uttered a solemn protest against his authority, and exchanged a pledge not to assist the emperor in any war, either offensive or defensive, which he might undertake, until the edict was revoked.

The Protestants, as all Reformists were thenceforward indiscriminately designated, next sent deputies to Charles, to explain alike their motives and the decision at which they had arrived; but their remonstrances were treated with contempt; and in 1530, the emperor held a diet at Augsburg, where Melancthon was employed by the Reformists to embody in writing the immortal profession of their faith, known as the Confession of Augsburg, which having received the signatures of the several princes, was delivered to Charles; who, although he still affected to disregard their coalition, had nevertheless taken instant measures to weaken the power and to destroy the authority of its members, by depriving them of all their religious and judicial privileges; moreover threatening those who refused to recur to their original faith with confiscation, exile, and even death.

Ferdinand of Austria had been proclaimed King of the Romans on the 5th of the following January, notwithstanding the opposition of the Protestant electors, who immediately became convinced that they should thereafter have to contend against another and an equally virulent enemy; and they accordingly assembled in person at Smalkalden, a petty town in Franconia, whither the emperor had already convened their deputies, and entered into a treaty of defensive alliance; entreating by letter both Henry VIII. and Francis to

assist them in the maintenance of their rights, and the defence of their liberties.

To this request the French king had not only acceded, but had also assured them that he entertained no doubt of the co-operation of his brother of England; and about the same time he had also received with marked courtesy the ambassadors despatched to his court by John Zapolsky,[1] Count of Sépus, whom the Hungarians had elected as their king, and who was anxious to form an alliance with one of the princesses of France, as well as to obtain a loan. Their embassy was successful; for Francis, with sundry professions of friendship towards the new sovereign, not only consented to bestow upon him the hand of Madame Isabeau, the sister of the King of Navarre, but also forwarded to him a sum of money, on condition that he should not invade the territories of any of the allies of France, or make war upon them; or in any extremity, or under any provocation, avail himself of the assistance of the Turks, as by countenancing the entrance of the Infidels into Christendom, he would draw down upon himself the vengeance of the French nation.

By this subtle stroke of policy Francis succeeded in

[1] John de Zapolsky, Vayvode of Transylvania, was appealed to by the Hungarian nobility to suppress the brigands who infested their country; and in recompense of his prompt and effective services, had been elected as the successor of Louis II. in 1526. His election was opposed by Ferdinand of Austria, who was also ambitious of the crown; and after a war which lasted for several years, the two rivals entered into a treaty (1536), by which each remained in undisturbed possession of the territories which he had conquered during the feud. Zapolsky died in 1540, without bequeathing the kingdom to his son John-Sigismond, who inherited only the sovereignty of Transylvania, and who died without issue in 1571.

rendering the Hungarian monarch powerless, for he was well aware that his only enemy was Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and that the sultan was his fast friend; while it is moreover asserted by Garnier that at the very moment in which he insisted on these terms, to the extreme edification of his subjects, he was already himself in secret correspondence with the Musselmans.

Towards the end of the summer Guillaume du Bellay, (Seigneur de Langes,) and M. de la Pommeraye, the two French ambassadors at the court of London, arranged with Henry VIII. the period and place at which the meeting should be held which had already been decided on between himself and their own sovereign. Montmorenci on the one side, and the Duke of Norfolk on the other, were entrusted with the arrangement of the ceremonial; and when all was duly prepared, Henry proceeded to Calais, while Francis took up his temporary residence at Boulogne. On the 20th of October the two kings met on the boundary of their respective territories, where the French monarch presented the dauphin and the Duke d'Orleans to his royal ally. Henry was attended by the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, the Earl of Richmond, and a splendid suite of nobles and gentlemen; while the Duke de Vendôme, and the Counts de Saint-Pol and de Guise, with all the first nobility of France, were in the train of Francis.

So soon as the first greetings were over, the French king conducted his royal guest to Boulogne, where he was received with a salute of artillery; and thence the courtly party proceeded to the abbey, an immense and majestic pile, having two wings connected by a stately

hall which served as the refectory of the monks, but which was on this occasion hung with costly draperies of tapestry, and roofed with scarlet silk. One of the wings of the building was appropriated to the English monarch, while the other was occupied by Francis himself. The two kings dined apart; after which they retired to a private cabinet, where they remained closeted together for a considerable time. On the morrow the magnificent hall was prepared for the banquet, with a profuse display of gold vessels, richly inlaid with jewels; and throughout the entertainment both the sovereigns were served by their respective officers on their knees. At the termination of the repast they attended mass in great state; after which Francis presented to his royal guest six superb horses; and the English king transferred to the young princes the three hundred thousand crowns which were due to him by their father. The Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk then received from the hands of their distinguished host the collar of St. Michael; a courtesy which Henry returned by conferring upon the Maréchal de Montmorenci, and Philippe de Brion-Chabot, Grand Admiral of Boulogne, the order of the garter.

At the end of several days, divided between business and festivity, the two courts removed to Calais, where Francis became, in his turn, the guest of his brother monarch, and where the same profuse magnificence was exhibited; and, finally, a treaty was concluded, and immediately rendered public, by which they bound themselves to supply an army of eighty thousand men, wherewith to resist the invasion of Christendom by the Turks. The result of their private conferences was,

however, more intimately connected with their own interests. Henry, irritated at the attitude assumed by Clement VII, frankly declared his indignation, affirming that his marriage was invalid, as he had the authority of the Gospel for what he had decided, and that the pope had no legitimate claim to the supremacy which he assumed. Well aware, also, of the besetting weakness of his listener, he conjured him never again to condescend to the humiliation of kissing the toe of a bishop of Rome; and represented how much the dignity of a crowned king suffered from so great a concession. He, moreover, complained bitterly of the pride of Clement VII, who had endeavoured to compel him either to proceed to Rome in person to solicit a papal dispensation for the divorce he sought, or to despatch thither an accredited plenipotentiary, authorized to act in his name; and, finally, he proposed that a general council should be immediately convened, to which the pontiff should be summoned by ambassadors from England and France, and called upon to redress the grievances of which the princes of Christendom had now such serious reasons to complain.

Francis, however, was careful not to commit himself. He had been apprised by the Cardinal de Grammont that the pope was desirous to secure an interview with him either at Nice or Avignon, immediately the emperor should have returned to Spain; while the cardinal, moreover, urgently entreated that he would not take any definitive step until he should have informed himself of the dispositions of the pontiff. Nevertheless, he admitted, in reply to the representations of Henry,

that he also had great cause of complaint against Clement VII, and expatiated largely upon the interference of the pontiff with the internal economy of the French Church; his failure in fulfilling his pledges; and the exorbitant outlay to which his government was compelled by the fees which he was required to give to all the ushers, chamberlains, and prothonotaries of Rome, whenever he found it necessary to ask any favour at the hands of the pope. After which, reverting to his more personal injuries, he expressed his indignation that Clement should so readily have credited the report that he was secretly allied with the Turks, while he had, on the contrary, spared no pains to justify His Holiness on every occasion where blame had been attached to him by other princes; and, finally, he expatiated in no measured terms upon the menaces, the intrigues, and the secret cabals by which the court of Rome had endeavoured to detach from his interest the most faithful of his allies.

Charles V, who had been apprised of the reception given to the Hungarian envoys, as well as of the reply which Francis had addressed to the Protestant princes, became, in his turn, suspicious that a conspiracy was forming against himself; a suspicion which the present meeting between the two kings, his declared enemies, tended to strengthen; and as it had become known that Solyman II. was about to attempt an invasion of Germany, he resolved to satisfy himself of the truth, by testing, without further delay, the sincerity of the French monarch. With this view he consequently summoned Francis to furnish an army against the Turks; a demonstration to which he was solemnly bound by the

treaty of Madrid, which he had repeatedly declared his readiness to make, and to which he had moreover just newly pledged himself in the treaty effected with the King of England; but in reply to the imperial requisition, the French sovereign, after numerous assertions of his zeal for religion, and his eagerness to assist in so noble and pious an enterprise, contented himself by offering to march a force of fifty thousand men to Italy for the protection of that country, while the emperor secured the safety of Germany; the Hungarian frontier being, as he affirmed, too distant from France to render it expedient for him to despatch a body of troops to that point.

His proposal was, as he had foreseen that it would be, instantly and definitively declined; and the emperor, convinced of the utter futility of anticipating any available assistance from France, immediately took the field in person, and succeeded in compelling the retreat of Soliman without even a hostile meeting.

There can be little doubt that the engagement made by Henry and Francis to join the crusade against the Infidels, was merely intended to avert the odium which their supineness was calculated to draw down upon them, and to delude the other Christian princes into a belief that they were ready to sacrifice more intimate interests to the defence of their religion; for it is certain that they never evinced the slightest intention of fulfilling their voluntary compact.

Never, perhaps, was the bad faith of Francis more conspicuous than throughout the whole period of his conferences with the English king; for, even while he

promised his support to the Reformists, and induced Henry VIII. to follow his example, he had already entered into a correspondence with the pope, requesting that they might meet in order to confer on the affairs of Christendom; and offering the hand of Henry, Duke d'Orleans, his second son, to Catherine de' Medici, the daughter of Lorenzo II, Duke d'Urbino, the niece of the pontiff.

Startled by the prospect of an alliance so infinitely above his hopes, Clement hesitated how to reply, for he doubted its sincerity, and suspected some covert treachery; and while under the influence of this distrust, he communicated the proposal of Francis to the emperor, who, equally convinced that it was intended only as a lure, advised him to follow up the negotiation, and thus entangle the French king in his own toils. But Charles was unaware of the policy which had dictated the offer. Francis still coveted the possession of Italy; and regarding the pope as the pivot of Italian politics, he looked upon his friendship and alliance as the corner-stone of success. To secure these he consequently considered no sacrifice too great; and hence the proposal which had been received with so much suspicion both by the pontiff and the emperor. As, however, even while pursuing the negotiation, Clement VII. had evinced no anxiety to bring it to a conclusion, Francis resolved to maintain his friendly intelligence with the English king; and to secure his assistance in extorting from the fears of the pope what he could not obtain from his favour.

An opportunity soon presented itself of effecting this stroke of policy; for the two monarchs were still at

Calais when intelligence reached them, that Charles V, having terminated his campaign against the Infidels, was about to leave Germany, and to repair to Spain through Italy, where he was to be met at Bologna by the pope. Alarmed at the consequences of such a meeting at that particular juncture, it was immediately proposed by Francis, and agreed by Henry, that the cardinals of Tournon and Grammont should be despatched to accompany the sovereign-pontiff, an attendance which he could not refuse from two princes of the church; and that they should be authorised to inform him that the Kings of England and France were prepared to demand a general council, in default of which they would convene distinct assemblies within their own kingdoms; when, in the event of this measure being forced upon them, they should prohibit their subjects from forwarding money to Rome. That, moreover, should the pontiff persist in pursuing with his censure the Most Christian king and his realm, and his majesty find it expedient to repair to Rome in order to obtain his absolution, he would do so with such a train of followers that His Holiness would easily be induced to satisfy his demand; and they were also instructed to remind him of the religious anarchy which existed not only in Germany and the Helvetic states, but throughout the whole of Christian Europe, and to bid him reflect upon the diminished influence of the Romish Church; as well as upon the fact, that, should two of the most powerful sovereigns of Christendom forsake his interests because they had been denied the justice which they demanded, they would infallibly find so many other

princes ready to make common cause with them, that the result must be fatal to his authority.

After this combined declaration, the two kings took leave of each other on the 30th of October, on the same spot where they had met, and with every demonstration of cordiality and affection; M. de Montpezat, the fortunate adventurer, who, after the battle of Pavia, had officiated as valet-de-chambre to Francis in his captivity, and who had been appointed one of his chamberlains, accompanying Henry VIII. to England as the ambassador of his sovereign.

CHAPTER IX.

[1533-34.]

THE POPE DESIRES TO CONCILIATE THE FRENCH KING—HIS PERSONAL AMBITION—A MEETING IS ARRANGED BETWEEN THE POPE AND FRANCIS—FRANCIS MAKES OVERTURES TO THE DUKE OF MILAN—UNTOWARD AFFAIR AT MILAN—MARAVIGLIA—HIS ARROGANCE AWAKENS THE SUSPICIONS OF CHARLES V.—TREASON OF SFORZA—A LACQUEY OF MARAVIGLIA CHALLENGES THE MILANESE COUNT CASTIGLIONE—MURDER OF MARAVIGLIA—INDIGNATION OF THE FRENCH KING—DUPLICITY OF SFORZA—THE DUKE'S ENVOY IS DISMISSED WITH IGNOMINY—CHARLES V. BESTOWS THE HAND OF THE PRINCESS CHRISTINA ON THE DUKE OF MILAN—DEATH OF THE DUKE—THE DUKE OF WIRTEMBERG SOLICITS THE SUPPORT OF FRANCIS AGAINST THE EMPEROR—DU BELLAY INTERCEDES FOR THE YOUNG DUKE—CONFIRMATION OF THE PEACE OF NUREMBERG—THE POPE PROCEEDS TO MARSEILLES TO MEET THE FRENCH KING—HE IS RECEIVED WITH GREAT POMP—HOMAGE IS RENDERED BY FRANCIS TO THE PONTIFF—THE LATIN ORATION—HENRY VIII. DESPATCHES BISHOP BONNER TO THE POPE—CHARLES V. ENDEAVOURS TO PREVENT THE MARRIAGE OF CATHERINE DE' MEDICI—THE MARRIAGE IS SOLEMNIZED BY THE POPE—THE BOY-CARDINAL—THE POPE RETURNS TO ITALY.

CHAPTER IX.

[1533-34.]

THE two French cardinals did not reach Bologna, whither the pope and the emperor had already preceded them, until the 4th of January, 1533; and they soon became aware that all the menaces with which they were charged might be left unuttered, as the pontiff was avowedly anxious to secure the friendship of their royal master, even declaring that he should scarcely consider any sacrifice too great by which he might regain it. And there can be no doubt that he was sincere when he made this assertion; for, infirm as he might be in purpose, and timid in the maintenance of his privileges and power, when he was required to support his pretensions by force, he was by no means deficient in the more subtle science of diplomacy; and readily comprehended that, should Francis in reality hold himself bound to fulfil the contract into which he had entered, he could anticipate no equivalent advantage at the hands of the emperor.

Clement VII, like his kinsman and predecessor in the papal dignity, Leo X, was devoted to the interests of his

family, and his ruling passion was the aggrandizement of the house of Medicis. He had seen, with an anguish which he could not always conceal, the apparently rapid extinction of his line; for in that light he regarded only the elder branch, who were the direct descendants of Como; and of whom none remained save Catherine, the Duchess d'Urbino, whose father was the great-grandson of Como; and who, although she bore the title of his niece, was in point of fact the grand-daughter of his own cousin-germain. The remainder, consisting of himself and his brothers, were illegitimate, and of these the pope was the eldest; Alessandro, upon whom he had conferred the duchy of Florence, the second; and Hyppolito, whom he had created a cardinal, the third. It will, therefore, readily be believed that Clement reflected with exultation upon the alliance of his niece with a prince of the blood royal of France; and the two cardinals were earnest in their assurances of the good faith of their sovereign. It is true that Charles V. had previously promised to Alessandro the hand of his daughter Marguerite, but the same stain was affixed to her birth which rested upon his own; whereas the Duke d'Orleans was the legitimate descendant of a line of princes.

The more, therefore, the pontiff reflected upon the proposal of Francis, and the more closely and carefully he compared the advantages which he should secure from his adhesion to either sovereign, the more he became convinced that the period for hesitation was at an end; and having arrived at this conclusion, the French cardinals had no sooner requested his decision with regard to the meeting proposed by their monarch, than

he declared his readiness, notwithstanding his advanced age and failing strength, to undertake a journey to Savoy for the purpose of a personal conference. To this place of meeting Francis, however, instantly objected, as, since the death of his mother, he had ceased to maintain any friendly intercourse with her family, who had been enriched and protected by the emperor. Clement then proposed Nice; but from the same motive the French king equally refused to enter that city, unless he were permitted to garrison both the town and the citadel with his own troops. From this concession the Duke de Savoie was dissuaded by Charles V, who was anxious to prevent the meeting; and ultimately the pope, who dreaded the failure of his brilliant hopes, declared his willingness even to proceed to France, and selected Marseilles as the place of rendezvous.

Two events had, however, occurred at Milan and Wirtemberg, which were calculated to retard the good understanding between the sovereign-pontiff and the French king, which each was so anxious to establish. Francis, in utter disregard of the treaty of Cambray, had never ceased his intrigues, either in Italy or in Germany. He could not forego his desire to secure once more the possession of Milan; and even while in treaty with the pope to accomplish the invasion of the duchy, he had endeavoured to renew his alliance with the duke himself.

Lorenzo Sforza, who had suffered severely from the enmity of the Spaniards during the war, had for some time past found himself a mere puppet in their hands. He possessed nothing of sovereignty save the name. He was a mere vassal to the emperor, by whose exor-

bitant demands he was impoverished; and moreover subjected to the surveillance of Antonio da Leyva, between whom and himself there existed an enmity of long standing, and who took a savage delight in exposing him to the most constant and bitter humiliations.

Under these circumstances it will be readily understood that Sforza did not reject the overtures of the French king; for he was too well aware of his inability to protect himself against the exactions of the emperor to lose so favourable an opportunity of securing the alliance of a powerful monarch; and it was consequently without any hesitation that he consented to permit the return of a Milanese emigrant, who, during the reign of Louis XII. had followed the grand equerry Galéaz San Sévérino to France, where he had accumulated a large fortune; and even allowed him to act as the secret agent of Francis at his court. His immense wealth enabled Maraviglia, the individual in question, to entertain the nobles of Milan with a profuse liberality, by which he soon attained great popularity; and, although many of the courtiers and foreigners who were then sojourning in the duchy were not without suspicion that his favour with Sforza was not altogether unconnected with interests beyond a mere personal regard, the precautions which had been adopted on both sides proved so efficient as to baffle, for a time, the curiosity of those who sought to elucidate the mystery.

Maraviglia had, on his departure from France, been furnished with letters of credence, which were to be kept secret unless circumstances should imperatively demand their recognition on the part of the French king; while

a second document, which merely recommended him to Sforza as a person worthy of his favour and protection, was also delivered to him, which he was instructed to present to the duke in the presence of his court.

Francis was, however, equally unfortunate in his selection of an agent and an ally; for the vanity of Maraviglia was so inflated by the fact of his having become the accredited envoy of a crowned head, that it was not long ere he assumed an authority and importance wholly incompatible with his station as a mere Milanese citizen; and, adopting a custom which had been introduced into Italy by the Spaniards, surrounded himself by a set of attendants who recognised no law beyond his pleasure, and were ever ready to seek and even to provoke quarrels in which they affected to uphold the honour of their master, with which Maraviglia soon taught himself to believe that that of the French nation was involved.

The arrogance of the *parvenu* gentleman ere long aroused the ever watchful distrust of the emperor, who complained to Sforza of the insults to which his subjects were exposed by the countenance he had seen fit to afford to an individual who could advance no claim to such a distinction, unless he were aware that he was supported by a higher power; while it was equally evident that should such a power exist, it could only be derived from the King of France; in which case he, the emperor, as the suzerain of the Duke of Milan, demanded the immediate dismissal of Maraviglia from the court; adding, that should Sforza hesitate to comply with his commands, the projected marriage between himself and the Princess of Denmark was thenceforward at an end.

The faithless ally, upon this threat, proved even a more dangerous confidant than the ostentatious agent; for he did not scruple, while forwarding to the emperor the letter of recommendation which had been given to Maraviglia, to declare that he simply recognised in him a Milanese citizen to whom Francis had requested him to show favour; and that, in acting as he had done, he had merely sought to give a worthy welcome to a person presented to him by one of the most powerful monarchs of Christendom. Charles V. was not, however, to be so deceived; he still urged the removal of the obnoxious and mysterious recipient of the duke's favour; and, ultimately, Sforza assured him that if he would only grant him the respite of a few days, he would convince him of the error of his suspicions.

Precisely at this period one of the lacqueys of Maraviglia, pretending to consider that words had been uttered by the Count Castiglione, a Milanese nobleman, which affected the honour of his master, immediately resented the affront in very unmeasured terms; but the count, probably considering the menial as too low in rank to permit him to reply to his intemperate address, silently shrugged his shoulders and passed on; when a second attendant of Maraviglia, either more courageous or more insolent than his comrade, followed up the defiance by pursuing the retiring noble, and declaring that he could not suffer such assertions to be made against the master whose livery he were, and whom all the Milanese, whatever might be their station, were bound to respect. Castiglione, who felt that his dignity would be involved by a brawl with the lacquey of an adventurer, bade him put

up his sword, which he had already unsheathed, asserting that it was not for him to measure weapons with a hired dependent; and, with a haughtiness and self-possession which only tended to aggravate the passion of his self-constituted opponent, referred him to a couple of his own followers, to whom he delegated the task of arranging the quarrel.

This richly merited but unpalatable check by no means tended to diminish the rage of the bully by whom he had been defied; while, on the other hand, the individuals of the count's suite were justly indignant at the disrespect evinced towards their lord; and accordingly, the two whom, as he proceeded on his way, he left behind him to discuss the merits of the affair, at once flung themselves upon the offender, and would have sacrificed him on the spot had they not been prevented by the bystanders.

When the circumstances of this outbreak were communicated to the duke, he insisted that no further notice should be taken of an affair which had evidently originated in a mistake, and which could profit neither party; a decision in which Maraviglia instantly acquiesced, declaring that he was unconscious of having a single enemy in Milan, where he had sought to conciliate all with whom he came into contact. But it would appear that Castiglione had received other and more secret instructions; for it is certain that he afterwards adopted a habit of constantly passing and repassing in front of the residence of Maraviglia, attended by a dozen armed attendants, and even attacked some of his people on one occasion without provocation of any sort. The unfor-

tunate agent, becoming alarmed for his personal safety, at once appealed to the magistrature for protection, but the interference of the civic authorities produced no satisfactory result. Castiglione persisted in his system of annoyance and aggression; and ultimately lost his life in an attack which he made upon the retainers of Maraviglia, who no sooner saw him fall than they totally routed his followers. This murder, committed in open daylight, and in a city where such enormities were unknown, excited universal indignation. Maraviglia was arrested on the following morning, as well as the whole of his household; he was tried without delay, and three days afterwards he was decapitated.

The indignation of Francis was unbounded when he was made acquainted with the fate of his equerry and agent; and he forthwith wrote to the pope, the emperor, and the Duke of Milan, complaining that he had suffered a crying indignity in the person of his ambassador, the sacred character of whose mission, hitherto respected throughout Europe, had been grossly violated. He also addressed letters of a similar tenor to Ferdinand, King of the Romans, to Henry VIII, and to the Helvetic States, as well as to all the petty European princes, representing the mischievous effect of such a precedent should it be suffered to remain unchastised, and calling upon them to avenge the insult offered to his kingly station and authority.

Sforza, in reply to this expostulation, at once despatched Francesco Taverna, his chancellor, to France, to offer his apologies for what had occurred; and even carried his audacity so far as to instruct his envoy to declare

to the king that he had never regarded Maraviglia in any other light than that of a simple citizen, and that, consequently, he was totally unprepared to expect that his majesty could feel so great an interest in his fate. He also authorized him to state that he was unaware of his holding official employment, which rendered his person sacred, having always been led to believe that Maraviglia had been induced to return to Milan, simply by a desire to expend the money which he had amassed abroad among his own countrymen, although he was cognisant of the fact that his majesty had honoured him with the arrangement of some private business totally unconnected with considerations of policy; but that, had he entertained the most remote idea that the unfortunate gentleman had been officially employed by so great a prince, to whom he himself owed so deep a debt of gratitude and respect, he would have watched over his days with a solicitude which must have averted a catastrophe that he should now never cease to deplore; while, recognising only in the accused gentleman a subject of his own, he had deemed it his duty to avenge upon him the blood of Count Castiglione, who was one of the officers of his household.

Francis indignantly refused to receive so hypocritical an explanation; and in the presence of the members of the privy council at which Taverna had delivered the exculpatory message of the duke, he sternly asserted that he was able to produce letters which would suffice to show that the duke had individually recognised the official character of the man whom he had, in defiance of the law of nations, subjected to an ignominious death. This declaration, for which he was wholly unprepared, startled the

Milanese chancellor; and when the king proceeded to inquire how it was, if the duke his master had indeed recognised in Maraviglia only a simple subject, that he had been led to violate in his case the usual forms of law; and, instead of affording him time and opportunity to refute the accusations brought against him, or, in default of his being able to do this, of causing him publicly to suffer death under the eyes of the assembled citizens of Milan, he had deprived him of all intercourse with the friends by whom he might have been justified, extorted false accusations from his servants under the influence of torture, and finally executed him during the night within the precincts of his prison; the embarrassed envoy, although esteemed one of the most able advocates of his day, replied falteringly, that the arrangement had originated in the deep respect entertained by the duke towards his majesty, whom he was unwilling to expose to the indignity which the public execution of one of his recognised agents would have appeared to sanction.

"Enough;" said Francis, with a stern gesture; "Your reply is a sufficient admission that the official character of my murdered ambassador was fully recognised by the Duke of Milan. And now, Sir, bear to your master the plain assurance that if he do not afford to me the satisfaction which I shall not be slow in demanding, I shall know how to render justice to myself."

As the reward of his unmanly and treacherous condescension, the emperor fulfilled his promise to Sforza; and notwithstanding the weak state of his health, and the premature decrepitude which compelled him to lean upon a staff throughout the whole duration of the nuptial

ceremony, he bestowed on him, in April 1534, the hand of his niece Christina.[1] From the period of his marriage, however, Sforza rapidly declined until he became totally infirm, and on the 24th of October in the following year he died. As he was the last representative of the Sforza family, Don Antonio da Leyva took possession of the duchy in the name of the emperor, and the young widow returned to Spain.

Meanwhile Ferdinand, King of the Romans, to whom his brother Charles V. had entrusted the government of Germany during his own sojourn in Italy and Spain, had renewed a long-enduring quarrel with the young Christophe, Duke of Wirtemberg; and this prince applied to Francis for his support against the aggressions of the emperor; representing that for more than seventeen years the duke Ulric, his father, had been dispossessed of his inheritance, and reminding him that by his marriage with the dowager-queen of Portugal, the sister of the emperor and the King of the Romans, who had taken possession of his duchy, he had the honour to be allied to his majesty through the Princess Sabine, his mother, who was the niece of Maximilian.

Francis at first refused to interfere in a misunderstanding which he declared to be more personal than political; but Martin du Bellay, who felt a lively interest in the young and princely applicant, suffering as he was from a spoliation entailed upon him by an ancient feud, with which he had been totally unconnected, conceived an expedient by which he was enabled to assist him without

[1] The Princess Christina was the daughter of the Archduchess Elizabeth of Austria, and of Christiern II. King of Denmark.

compromising his sovereign; and accordingly agreed to lend him a hundred thousand crowns on the security of the county of Montbelliard, ostensibly as its purchaser, but in reality to enable him to pay his troops, and to raise new levies. With this assistance, and the aid of the protestant princes, whose faith he had openly embraced, the duke was enabled to possess himself of Lauffen; and ultimately, with little delay, to make himself master of the duchy of Wirtemberg, where one of his first acts of sovereignty was to establish the reformed religion.

Nevertheless, the war in Germany, which had been considered as an inevitable result of these events, was still delayed. Ferdinand, instead of resenting a defeat which he must have keenly felt, availed himself of the opportunity to enter into a fresh treaty with the league of Smalkalden; and on the 29th of June, 1534, the peace of Nuremberg was confirmed.

This arrangement was not, however, yet concluded when the pope commenced his journey to Marseilles; and had not his personal ambition been involved in the interview to which he had so readily acceded, the two events here detailed were calculated to render it of a less pacific character than he had originally anticipated. But Clement VII. was already an old man, and still more aged by infirmity than by years. His ambition had out-lasted his susceptibility, and in the advancement of his family he forgot all more politic considerations. He was aware of the support which had been afforded to the protestants of Germany by the monarch with whom he was about to treat; he had been apprised that he had already threatened

to invade Lombardy in order to avenge the death of Maraviglia; nor was he ignorant of the close alliance which Francis had formed with Henry VIII, and which threatened the annihilation of the papal supremacy; but he cast off these memories to reflect only upon the brilliant alliance which had been offered to his niece. The evil effects likely to result from the political measures of the French king failed to turn him from his purpose, they regarded rather his successors than himself; whereas the marriage of Catherine was a personal triumph within his very grasp, and almost independent of the future.

Under the influence of this all-absorbing passion Clement VII. accordingly persisted in his purpose, and embarked at Pisa for Marseilles on the 4th of October, accompanied by a fleet of French galleys under the command of the Duke d'Aubigny. The duke himself had, however, preceded him by several days, and had already landed with Catherine de' Medici, whom papal etiquette did not permit to travel with her uncle. This delicate and honourable mission had consequently been entrusted to the Duke d'Aubigny, not only as a proof of the personal regard and confidence of the king, but also because that noble had married her maternal aunt, and had thus become her relative.

The arrival of the pontiff in the port was announced by the discharge of three hundred cannon from the batteries, and the salute was returned by the guns of the vessels. The Maréchal de Montmorenci received him on his landing, and conducted him in a costly litter, surrounded by pages and men-at-arms, to the splendid residence which had been prepared for him

in one of the faubourgs; and on the following morning he made his public entry into the city with great pomp and ceremony. At the gates he was met by all the ecclesiastics of the diocese headed by their prelate; by the abbot of St. Victor and his community; by the judicial authorities; by the great nobles who had been assembled to welcome him; and he was immediately followed by the king himself, who had arrived at Marseilles only a few hours previously, by the queen, and by all the principal members of the court. The houses in the streets traversed by the two potentates were hung with tapestry and silks of gorgeous colours, and the pavement was thickly strewn with rich autumnal flowers and branches of odoriferous shrubs.

Delighted to co-operate with her royal husband in every measure likely to ensure the peace of Europe, and equally so at the prospect of welcoming to her affection a new friend and daughter, the reception given by Eleonora to the beautiful girl, who, on descending from her litter at the approach of the royal party, knelt to make her obeisance to her future stepmother, was full of dignified and unaffected kindness; and she had no sooner, on withdrawing her hand from the lips of Catherine, impressed a kiss upon her brow, than she compelled her to enter her own litter, and thus side by side they proceeded to the residence which had been prepared for the reception of the queen, and where a suite of apartments had been reserved for the young duchess and her attendants.

The pope and the king occupied two houses directly opposite to each other, and of the same dimensions, which were connected by a temporary gallery flung

across the street, and converted into a magnificent saloon hung with tapestry and cloth of gold, which afforded them private access to each other at all hours.

Nor was the triumph of Clement VII. merely a public one; for Francis had no sooner introduced him into the splendid hall in which their conferences were to be held, than, notwithstanding the pledge which he had given to Henry VIII, that, like himself, he would never again recognise in the person of the pope any higher dignity than that of bishop of Rome, he humbly bent the knee before him, and kissed in succession his foot, his hand, and his cheek; after which he presented to him his eldest son, who in like manner knelt and saluted him. The dauphin was replaced in his turn by the two younger princes, who kissed his feet and his hands; and they were followed by the great dignitaries of the court, who kissed his feet only.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the bishop of Paris declared, in the name of his sovereign, "that the very christian king, as the elder son of the Church, recognised His Holiness in all humility and devotion as the pontiff and true vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ; revering him as the successor of St. Peter, and offering him obedience and fidelity; pledging himself with all his power to uphold the safety of His Holiness and of the holy apostolical see, as all his predecessors had done before him."

It had been originally intended that this address should be delivered by the President Poyer, afterwards chancellor of France; but this dignitary, although recognised as the most eloquent speaker of his time,

was comparatively ignorant of the Latin language, and could not undertake the duty until by close study he had rendered himself able to repeat the discourse which had been prepared for him. As it was, however, necessary to ascertain the feeling of the pontiff with regard to the subjects which were to be mooted in this public address, the master of the court ceremonies waited upon him for instructions, when all the preparatory labour of the unhappy president was rendered useless by the declaration of Clement that he was anxious to avoid, on such an occasion, every allusion either to the emperor or any other christian prince which might be construed into an affront; and that he should prefer not being called upon to listen to any save a purely theological oration.

In this dilemma Jean du Bellay, bishop of Paris, was nominated to replace him; which he did upon the instant with an eloquence and ability worthy of his reputation.

A splendid banquet was then served; after which the pope and the king retired to confer together on the various subjects of importance which they were met to discuss; and during their interview Francis warmly urged the pontiff to recognise and sanction the divorce of Henry VIII; assuring him that the English monarch was actuated only by motives of conscience in seeking to repudiate a princess whose conduct alike as a wife and a mother had been irreproachable. Clement, however, refused to lend himself to what he stigmatized as an act of tyranny and injustice; for, satisfied as he was that he had secured the friendship of Francis, he was still unwilling to incur the enmity of the emperor; while the royal intercessor, on his side, considered it equally inex-

pedient to inform his guest that he had pledged himself to the English monarch not to consent to the marriage of his son with Catherine de' Medici until he had wrested from the pope a consent to his own divorce. From this difficulty Francis was, however, extricated in an unexpected manner, for in an audience granted by the pontiff to Bishop Bonner, who had been despatched to France by Henry VIII. for that purpose, the prelate boldly announced that his sovereign had appealed from the decision of His Holiness to that of the general council; upon which the French king, rejoiced to be emancipated from the performance of his promise, and to find himself relieved from a responsibility by which his personal views were frustrated, immediately declared that he could not sanction the affront which had been offered to the head of the Church by such a determination; and that, although he should ever regard the English monarch as a brother, he could not uphold him, or any other prince, in a matter which involved the interests of the religion that he professed.

Thus unexpectedly liberated from his engagement, Francis found himself free to negotiate the preliminaries of the marriage of his son Henry Duke d'Orleans with Catherine de' Medici, which, for the misfortune of France, was finally arranged at this period; the prince not having yet attained his fifteenth year, and the niece of the pope being his junior by eighteen months. The apparent dowry of the bride was by no means a splendid one to bring to a royal house; for it consisted only of a hundred thousand crowns, and the French estates which she inherited from her mother, Madelaine

de la Tour d'Auvergne, which were of about equal value. This fact furnished abundant amusement to the French courtiers; who, little foreseeing the frightful effects which were to result from this ill-omened alliance, dwelt only upon the paucity of her portion, and the extraordinary infatuation of the king, who might have commanded for his son the hand of a princess with a duchy for her dowry. Some among them even went so far as to express to sundry of the papal officers their astonishment that the niece of a sovereign pontiff should possess no greater fortune than the heiress of a French finance minister; but they were speedily and agreeably silenced by Philippo Strozzi, the ambassador of Clement, who, in reply to a remark of this nature said with a quiet smile; "You appear to forget, gentlemen, that she also adds to the crown of France three jewels of inestimable value; Genoa, Milan, and Naples."

The emperor subsequently heard and registered this incautious and ill-judged rejoinder; but even before he was apprised of its having been made he had become alarmed, and wrote to the pontiff entreating him not to consent to a marriage so inimical to the interests of Italy; or, in the event of his persisting in the alliance, urging him to oblige the king to give a pledge not to make any fresh attempts upon that country; to confirm the treaties of Madrid and Cambray; and to consent to the convocation of the council. Furthermore, he exhorted him to interfere in the matter of the English divorce, representing the extent of the injury which was meditated against his own aunt; but Clement, in reply, declined to commit himself by making such a promise,

declaring that the French king had done him so much honour by offering the hand of his second son to a member of his own house, that he was not in a position to impose conditions upon him; although he was ready to exert all his influence to secure the peace of Italy.

With this answer the emperor was compelled to rest satisfied; although he would doubtlessly have used more strenuous arguments had he been aware that when the Duke d'Aubigny had been commissioned to negotiate the marriage, the exultation of the pope was so great, that in addition to the dowry in specie to which allusion has already been made, he agreed to include in the marriage portion of his nicce the provinces of Reggio, Modena, Rubeira, Pisa, Livorna, Parma, and Placenza; to unite his own army with that of Francis to regain for her the duchy of Urbino, which had been wrested from the Medici after the death of Leo X; to assist him in the recovery of the Milanese; and, finally, to unite all these important territories upon the heads of the Duke d'Orleans and his bride. Of this private arrangement Charles was, however, totally ignorant; and feeling that the French king must have had some powerful motive for proposing so disproportionate an alliance, he did not hesitate to attribute the concession to a projected invasion of the Milanese.

Presents of great value having been exchanged, and the necessary preparations completed, the marriage was eventually solemnized by the pope himself, on the 29th of October, with a splendour which formed a strong contrast to the hurried and undignified ceremony that had so recently made the gentle Eleonora, Queen of France.

The extreme personal beauty of the young couple, aged respectively fifteen and thirteen years, the magnificence of their apparel, the sumptuousness of the monarch, his queen, and their united courts, the ecclesiastical pomp, the flashing of jewels under the glare of innumerable tapers, and the presence of the supreme pontiff himself, all tended to render this, destined to be a fatal day to France, one of the greatest brilliancy and gorgeousness.

On the return of the illustrious bridal party to the temporary palace of the king, whither they were followed by the acclamations of the populace, who energetically shouted *Noël* for their young prince and his fair bride—whom they little suspected was one day fated to become the curse of the nation over which she was called to rule—a presentation was held in the hall of tapestry, at which the king invested four of the papal dignitaries with the order of St. Michael; while Clement, at his express request, created four new French cardinals, among whom was Odet de Châtillon, the nephew of Anne de Montmorenci, who had only just attained his thirteenth year; and who, notwithstanding this extraordinary elevation, subsequently embraced the reformed religion.

The marriage festivities were prolonged until the 12th of November; when the pope and his suite, having taken leave of the French court, departed from Marseilles for Civita Vecchia on board the same vessels by which they had been conveyed thither; but on his arrival in that port, Clement dismissed the Duke d'Aubigny and his fleet with a profusion of both gifts and protestations, and on the 6th of December embarked in the gallies of

Andrea Doria, who was still in the service of the emperor; a stroke of policy by which he hoped to disarm the jealousy of Charles.

The departure of the pontiff from the city was followed by that of the king and queen; and in the course of a few days the whole of the royal train were on their way to Amboise, and Marseilles was once more shorn of its temporary splendour.

CHAPTER X.

[1534.]

THE FEMALE COURT OF FRANCIS I.—THE QUEEN OF NAVARRE—MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—QUEEN ELEONORA—THE DUCHESS D'ETAMPES—FLEETING FAVOURITISM—CATHERINE DE' MEDICI—THE KING'S HOUSEHOLD—LAX MORALITY OF THE ROYAL CIRCLE—THE RIVAL ROUÉS—RESIGNATION OF QUEEN ELEONORA—MONTMORENCI CONCEIVES A PASSION FOR THE QUEEN—HE DECLARES IT, AND IS HAUGHTILY REPULSED—AN ECCENTRIC COMPACT—MIRTH OF THE COURTIERS—MARRIAGE OF HENRY VIII. AND ANNA BOLEYN—HE IS EXCOMMUNICATED BY THE POPE—DEATH OF KATHERINE OF ARAGON—HENRY VIII. PERSECUTES THE ROMANISTS—DEATH OF CLEMENT VII.—ACCESSION OF PAUL III.—FRANCIS RE-ORGANIZES HIS ARMY—CHARLES V. TAKES TUNIS—FRANCIS IS ACCUSED OF MAINTAINING AN INTELLIGENCE WITH SOLYMAN—BARBARITY OF FRANCIS TOWARDS THE REFORMISTS—THE SILVER IMAGE—FRIGHTFUL EXECUTIONS.

CHAPTER X.

[1534.]

Two years only had elapsed since Francis had been emancipated by death from the domination of Louise de Savoie, and already in the person of Catherine de' Medicis a new power had arisen, by which he was to be equally thralled. Of all the female members of his family, his wives alone had failed to influence either his affections or his actions. Alike gentle and unambitious, they shrank before his coldness, and trembled at his frown; while women of meaner rank, and of less than questionable virtue, braved his displeasure, and moulded him to their will. In the Queen of Navarre he had recognised at once a companion and a friend; he was conscious of her superiority of intellect, and grateful for her tenderness; and had Marguerite exerted the power which she really possessed over his mind, to wean him from those habits of profligacy by which his memory is disgraced, instead of treating the most sacred duties with disregard when by such a concession she felt that she was ministering to his temporary gratification, it is

probable that he would have become more estimable both as a monarch and a man. But the daughter of Louise de Savoie had been reared in a school little likely to render her a moral monitress; and the author of the Heptameron, or "all the naughty tricks played by women on the poor men," as she describes it in her preface, could scarcely be expected to afford any efficient aid in the reformation of his character. Of the Duchess d'Angoulême, both as a mother and as a guide, we have already said enough. Of the influence of Madame de Châteaubriand during her period of favour, many baneful effects remained: although, when the opportunities of evil which she had once possessed are taken into consideration, even her career may be deemed comparatively harmless; but at the period of Catherine's advent to France, the full-blown vices of Madame d'Etampes were the marvel and the anathema of the nation.

The queen, conscious that she possessed no power sufficiently great to counteract that of the favourite, had ceased even to strive against it; and thus the only pure-hearted woman who would have loved him for his own sake, and who might eventually have restored him to a more fitting sense of the duties which he owed alike to himself and to society, was reduced to weep over the errors that she was unable to eradicate.

We pass over, for obvious reasons, the minor influences, each perhaps insignificant in itself, but in the aggregate fearfully mischievous, which were exercised by the fair and frail maids of honour; each, or nearly each, being in her turn the "Cynthia of the minute;" and more than one of whom owed her temporary favour to the Duchess

d'Etampes herself; whose secret intrigues and undisguised ambition absorbed more of her time than could have been left at her disposal, had she not provided the inconstant but nevertheless exacting monarch with some new object of interest; and the tact with which she selected these facile beauties was not one of the least of her talents. Never, upon any occasion, did she direct the attention of the king to a woman whose intellect might have secured his conquest after the spell of her beauty had ceased to thrall him: the young and the lovely were her victims, only where their youth and their loveliness were their sole attractions. She was ever ready to supply her royal lover with a new mistress, but never with a friend, a companion, or a counsellor; and thus, as she had rightly foreseen, the French Sardanapalus soon became sated by the mere prettiness of his female satellites, and returned to his allegiance to herself, wearied, and more her slave than ever.

Such was the state of the court in which the Duchess d'Orleans was called to assume her station as a princess of the blood; and, mere girl as she was, she at once appreciated alike the difficulties and advantages of her position. A king whose leading passions were dissipation and magnificence; a queen who shrank from publicity of all kinds, and who had neither inclination to upbraid, nor energy to resist injustice; a dauphin staid and serious beyond his years; a powerful and insolent favourite; a licentious nobility; a morose and careless husband;—such were the elements out of which she had to construct a future for herself; and Catherine de' Medici did not fail to prove herself worthy of the name she bore.

Nature had admirably fitted her for the part which she was about to enact. De Thou describes her as a woman of "immense mind, and superb magnificence;" while Brantôme expatiates with more voluptuousness than delicacy upon her personal attractions, and her feminine accomplishments; to which, however, were superadded the masculine attainments of riding, playing at tennis, shooting with a cross-bow, and boar-hunting.

No less ambitious and intriguing than Louise de Savoie, Catherine, even from the very period of her marriage, possessed a power of dissimulation which enabled her to veil her vices under a mask of fascination that few were able to resist; and thus she became at once not only the idol of the whole court, but also that of Francis himself; and it soon required the most finished art on the part even of Madame d'Etampes to counteract her daily-increasing influence.

Although a girl in years, Catherine was already old in heart; and her unexpected elevation, instead of satisfying, had merely served to excite, the love of power and domination which her after-career so fatally developed. Haughty and imperious in spirit, she possessed sufficient command over not only her words and actions, but even her very looks, to render the real sentiments of her heart subservient to her ambition; and to conceal her most serious designs under a playful carelessness of manner by which those who surrounded her were duped into a belief that she was occupied only by the passing pleasure of the hour.

Thus constituted, the young princess could not but prove a dangerous rival, even to the astute and experienced Madame d'Etampes; but this was not the

CATHERINE DE MEDICI

ENGRAVED BY J.W. COOK FROM A PORTRAIT PUBLISHED IN NIELLO

"ILLUSTRES FRANCAIS DU 16me SIECLE"

only peril to which her favour was at that moment exposed. On the decease of Louis de Brézé, Grand-Sénéchal of Normandy, his young and lovely widow, Diane de Poitiers, had taken up her residence at the court, where she was warmly welcomed by the king, who treated her upon all occasions with a marked distinction well calculated to arouse the apprehensions of the jealous duchess. The impression produced upon the heart, or perhaps more properly speaking upon the fancy of Francis, by the extraordinary personal attractions of la Grande-Sénéchale on her first appearance before him, had long been matter of notoriety; and, as the twelve years which had since elapsed had only tended to change the lovely and graceful girl into a dignified and dazzling woman, not a few among the courtiers began to indulge themselves in a spirit of prophecy, little calculated to flatter the vanity of the reigning favourite. Meanwhile Catherine de' Medici became ere long the fast friend of the beautiful young widow; and thus the position of Madame d'Etampes was apparently rendered tenfold more precarious.

Such was the circle in which Francis I. passed his leisure moments; and they, as we have shown, comprised no small portion of his entire existence; while the manner in which his household was constituted tended rather to increase than to diminish the pernicious effects of such an association. The principal officers of whom the royal household had formerly been composed, were at the same time officers of the crown; great nobles, representing the highest and most ancient families in the kingdom; and who held this dignity as an

hereditary and unalienable right. They possessed authority not only over the subordinates in their several departments, but also over all the private citizens who were in the employment of the court; and were, in short, while fulfilling their duties to the sovereign, in the position of feudal barons, their service being more honourable to the throne than agreeable to the monarch; the tenacity with which they insisted upon the observance of their privileges, and the punctilious parade with which they performed the ceremonials of their several offices, rendering them more frequently the opponents than the instruments of their royal master's will. Francis, as it may be readily imagined, could ill brook the partial subserviency to which he was reduced by such a system; and accordingly he confined the grand officers of the crown to the crown itself; and formed a personal household totally distinct from these dignities; selecting for that purpose such of the nobles and courtiers as he considered the most calculated to contribute to the magnificence and brilliancy of his own circle.

This arrangement revolutionized the whole court; neither birth nor extent of territory any longer ensured to its possessor the right of attendance upon the person of the sovereign. Wealth failed where wit triumphed; the uncle of the favourite became Great-Almoner of France; and the minor appointments were made upon the same principle. Younger brothers, who under a different reign would have despaired of figuring in the immediate circles of royalty, saw their elders compelled to yield to their better fortune; and obscure abbés, celebrated for their gallantry, or patronised by a frail beauty, found them-

selves on a level with mitred bishops and lordly abbots. In a court so constituted, it is not wonderful that every species of amusement, splendour, and profligacy, soon abounded; the haughtiest of the nobility devoured their mortification, and laid aside their *morgue*, in order to obtain an entrance within the magic circle; while even the church dignitaries did not disdain to follow their example. Ambition as well as inclination led to this result; for it soon became apparent that court favour was the only avenue to personal advancement; and thus prelates of the highest rank soon taught themselves to participate in frivolous and degrading pursuits ill suited alike to their sacred calling, or to the example which they were bound to offer to the laity.

And in the midst of this vain, and eager, and voluptuous throng of sycophantic courtiers, who acknowledged no law save the will of the monarch, and no religion save his pleasure, were congregated the most noble and the most beautiful women of whom France could boast. The circle of the queen had been formed from that of Louise de Savoie; the court of Marguerite de Navarre, during her frequent visits to her royal brother, was comprised of wit, fascination, and gallantry; Catherine de' Medici had been followed to France by a train of ladies equally attractive and equally facile; and thus it will cease to be subject of surprise, that ere long purity and virtue were not only disregarded, but even made the common theme of sarcasm and contempt.

We dare not comment upon this frightful feature of the reign of Francis I; but as faithful chroniclers we are compelled to record, that while the highest honours of

profligacy were unanimously awarded to the king himself, the second were conceded to the Cardinal of Lorraine,[1] one of the first prelates of the kingdom.

Turn we rather to the one fair oäsis in this desert of corruption—to the pure if not peaceful solitude of the forsaken queen. On one at least of the giddy throng by whom Francis was surrounded, the meek but dignified resignation of Eleonora had made a profound impression; and that one was the Maréchal de Montmorenci. High in the favour of the king, and as upright as he was brave, the godson of Anne de Bretagne could not, nevertheless, contemplate the unhappy position of the queen without experiencing a deep interest in her fate, which soon grew into a warmer feeling. He knew the pride of her Spanish spirit, and he was, consequently, well aware of the daily and hourly struggle to which she was condemned; and although he had hitherto remained insensible to the blandishments of beauty and the fascinations of coquetry, he suffered himself to be betrayed into a passion for the wife of his sovereign. Conscious, however, of the enormity of his error, he strove for many months to conceal from Eleonora the state of his affections; while she, utterly unsuspicious of the feeling which she had elicited in the breast of the stern soldier,

[1] Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine, was the younger brother of François, Duke de Guise, who was shot at the siege of Orleans, in 1563, by Poltrot de Méré, after having obtained the reputation of being the ablest soldier of his time, and the appointment of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. Charles de Guise, Cardinal de Lorraine, more celebrated for his dissipation than his sanctity, and accounted one of the handsomest nobles in France, became Finance Minister under Francis II.

continued to welcome him to her presence with a warmth and kindness which only tended to increase the evil. It was under his protection that she had entered France; he had known her in her own sunny Spain, where she was honoured and happy; she could converse with him upon the past, and, for a time at least, forget the present. He alone cared to remember that she was neglected and desolate; no wonder, therefore, that even in her most melancholy moments she had ever a smile and a gentle greeting for the gallant marshal.

The moment came at last, however, in which Montmorenci could no longer maintain his self-command. The court were hunting in the woods of Chambord. The Queen of Navarre, and Catherine de' Medici, had followed in the train of the king; the blue litter of Madame d'Etampes had passed the gates, and proceeded apparently in the same direction; and the palace of Amboise was deserted by all save Eleonora and the maréchal, who, on a pretext of indisposition, had been permitted to absent himself from the royal sport.

The wife of Francis I. was seated at an open casement overlooking the bright current of the Loire. Her head rested upon her hand, and an expression of acute suffering was visible on her fine features; but her eyes were tearless as they followed unconsciously the course of the sparkling ripples upon which they lingered. She started, however, from her reverie when Montmorenci was announced, and extended towards him her hand, which he raised respectfully to his lips.

"You here, M. le Maréchal!" she exclaimed with undisguised astonishment; "I heard that the whole court were at Chambord."

"Your Majesty is at Amboise;" was the abrupt reply.

"True;" said the poor queen, forcing a smile; "I, as you are aware, am unequal to such an exertion either of strength or skill as that of a royal hunt. But you, Monsieur? Can it be that you have lost taste for this courtly diversion? or, what I should much more deplore, that the king—"

"No, Madame, no;" interposed Montmorenci; "his Majesty did not decline my attendance; and I am as keen a sportsman as even your august husband himself; but, nevertheless, I have not followed the hunt."

"And wherefore?" demanded Eleonora absently, as she passed her hand across her brow, and endeavoured to arouse herself more thoroughly from her reverie.

"I will tell you, Madame;" said the maréchal with an unsteady voice, as he fixed his eyes earnestly upon her; "because your unhappiness is destroying my existence—Because you are at once the most admirable and the most ill-used of your sex—because—ay, wither me if you will, Madame, with your frown, but I have already suffered for months, and I must now speak or die—because I love you, and would rather expire here, at your feet, than live on longer in the same torment."

"Do you know to whom you speak, Sir?" asked the queen, rising from her seat as the maréchal sank on his knee before her. "Can you, too—*you*—have forgotten that I am the Queen of France; the wife of your sovereign?"

"That you are Queen of France may the saints be praised!" murmured Montmorenci; "that you are the wife of Francis I live only to deplore."

"Sir;" said Eleonora haughtily, as she seized the small rattle of polished steel which was at that period the substitute for a bell, and which lay on a table at her side; "will you compel me to summon my attendants, and to dishonour you? Do you seek to dishonour *me?*"

"Heaven forbid, Madame;" said the maréchal, rising from the floor; "I have already sinned more than enough. That I love you is my misfortune; do not make it my crime. I will deserve your forbearance. Neither commands nor threats can compel me to do otherwise than regard you as the most perfect of your sex. Say or do what you will, that fact must remain unaltered; but I will never again intrude it upon you. Grant me only one favour, and I am yours in life and death."

"And that favour, Sir?"

"Is simple enough, your Majesty. Only allow me, whenever I have the honour to approach your person, to pronounce the words 'Good morrow, Madame,' that when they meet your ear they may remind you of the humble and obedient lover, whom even your contempt could not alienate."

"So be it, M. le Maréchal;" said the queen, striving to suppress the smile elicited by so extraordinary a request; "thus much I may in honour concede; but I rely on your good faith."

"Nor shall you repent the trust, Madame;" was the reply of the supplicant, as he made his parting salutation; "but should you ever want a hand to support, or an arm to avenge you, remember Montmorenci."

In another instant the maréchal had disappeared; and while the brilliant train which followed Francis

through the woods of Chambord filled the echoes of the forest-paths with the clamours of their joyous revelry, his deserted wife flung herself back upon her seat; and, with her face buried in her hands, wept the hot tears of mortification, wounded pride, and that unutterable anguish which not even tears can solace."

Montmorenci religiously adhered to the compact into which he had voluntarily entered; and from thenceforward never omitted, while respectfully performing his obeisance to the queen, to say in a slow and melancholy tone, "Good morrow, Madame," without on any occasion adding a single word of homage or of compliment. This peculiarity soon attracted the attention of the court, to whom the "audiences" of M. de Montmorenci became a perpetual source of curiosity and amusement; but neither the sneers of some, nor the smiles of all, disturbed for a moment the gravity of the maréchal; although at times even the lip of Eleonora herself quivered with a transient expression of mirth.

It is certain, moreover, that the self-command and good faith of her eccentric admirer made a gradual impression upon the feelings of the queen; her womanly vanity was flattered, and her gratitude excited by a constancy of devotion to which she had long been unaccustomed; and whereas she originally replied to his address only by a grave bow, she ere long relented so far as to repay his perseverance by a more gracious gesture; although she still received his greeting with dignified reserve.

The marriage of Henry VIII. with Anna Boleyn had meanwhile taken place, despite the refusal of the pope to

recognise the divorce of Katherine; and although it had been solemnized in the presence of not more than half a dozen witnesses, the fact soon transpired, and excited the indignation of both the pontiff and the emperor to so high a degree, that despite the entreaties of Francis, who earnestly endeavoured to avert such a calamity, sentence of excommunication was fulminated against the English monarch. This extreme step had only been taken a couple of days, when a courier arrived in Rome, empowered by Henry to declare his willingness to abide the judgment of the holy see for his disobedience, provided that certain of the cardinals, who were inimical to him, should not be included in the council. It was, however, too late. The pope had suffered his passion to betray him into a precipitation as unwise as it was irremediable; and the English king was no sooner informed that the walls of the Eternal City were placarded with the bull which had been fulminated against him, than he openly avowed himself as the head of the Reformed Church, and declared both himself and his kingdom independent of all papal interference or control.

The unfortunate Katherine of Aragon expired in the January of 1534, an event which rendered the impolitic haste of Clement still more conspicuous; and there is little doubt that the annoyance and regret to which he was subjected by a consciousness of the serious error into which he had been betrayed, and the perpetual remorse induced by the reports that reached him of the virulence to which Henry, in order to avenge the insult offered to his own dignity, was persecuting the Romanists in England, accelerated his own end. He died on the

24th of September in the same year, and was succeeded by Alessandro Farnese, who assumed the title of Paul III.[1]

A short time subsequently, the Count de Nassau, with his son the Prince of Orange, visited the French court on their way from Spain into Flanders, and were entrusted by Charles V. with proposals of friendship and alliance, in which he represented to Francis the importance of a perfect understanding between the two most powerful monarchs of Christendom; who, were they to combine their strength and their resources with mutual faith and good-will, might defy and control the whole of Europe. In order, as he moreover asserted, to prove his own sincerity in this belief, he offered the hand of one of his nieces to the Dauphin, and that of his son to a princess of France; and, in return for his thus taking the initiative, he requested that the French king, should he decline this double alliance, would at least abstain from invading his territories during his absence on a campaign against the Infidels which he was about to undertake; but the moment was an unpropitious one for the success of such a negotiation.

The death of Clement VII. was a severe blow to the previsions of Francis, who had depended upon the exertions of the Medici to insure to the Duke d'Orleans a powerful sovereignty in Lombardy. The late peace, brief as it was, had nevertheless sufficed to weary

[1] Pope Paul III. (Alessandro Farnese) was a native of Rome, Bishop of Ostia, and Dean of the Holy College. When unanimously elected by the Conclave, he had already attained his sixty-eighth year. He had, previously to entering into holy orders, become the father of two children: a daughter who married Bosio Sforza, and a son, Pietro Luigi Farnese, whom he made Duke of Parma.

him of inaction. The treaty of Cambray was an undying source of irritation; the nation was relieved from civil discord, and had ceased to oppose the system of taxation which he had introduced; the bequest of his mother, and the public revenues, had once more replenished his treasury; he was surrounded by a young and impetuous nobility, eager for adventure and distinction, and looking back restlessly upon their past successes; he believed himself secure of the alliance of Henry VIII, in whose cause he had so strenuously exerted his influence with the late pope; and who had, by his repudiation of Katherine of Aragon, so exasperated the emperor, that he was anticipating a descent of the imperialists upon England; and he calculated, moreover, that he could rely not only upon the assistance of the Protestant princes, in the event of his engaging in a new war, but also upon that of the sultan.

No wonder then that, eager at once for excitement and revenge, Francis soon found a pretext for the renewal of hostilities against his old rival. He accordingly busied himself in the re-organization of his army; and formed a militia upon the model of the ancient Roman legions, which was composed entirely of his own subjects, and in which no individual of either the German or Swiss troops who were in his pay was permitted to serve. This force amounted to forty-two thousand men; and in May, 1534, he made a progress through the seven provinces, each of which had supplied its quota of six thousand troops, accompanied by his whole court, and passed the several legions successively in review.

Charles V. was meanwhile actively engaged against

the pirates of Africa; his success was signal; and in little more than two months he had landed in that country, defeated Barbarossa before Tunis, reinstated Muley Hassan, taken possession of all the seaports of Barbary, and released upwards of twenty thousand Christian slaves, whom he conveyed to their several countries to bless and extol the name of their deliverer.

All Christendom rang with the praises of the emperor. To every nation in Europe he had restored some of its lost subjects; and the voice of gratitude was loud on every side; while, on the other hand, the intelligence which the French king was known to maintain with the Infidels, had excited universal indignation and distrust. In vain did Francis deny the accusation, and denounce the emperor as his enemy for having suffered it to gain credence. It was known that Solyman had secret agents at his court; he felt that his reputation was shaken throughout the whole Christian world; and he was conscious that he dare not attempt to attack the power of Charles while he was engaged in protecting religion and humanity from the barbarity of the Moslem.

But the year 1534 was, nevertheless, not fated to terminate without its own peculiar tragedy. Alarmed by the evil feeling which existed against him, Francis pursued with redoubled animosity the professors of Protestantism within his own kingdom. The tenets of Calvin were already beginning to rival those of Luther, and were promulgated throughout France and the Low Countries by his discipes; placards, denying the truth of the doctrine of transubstantiation, were scattered in the streets, and even pasted upon the walls of the Louvre;

and the king eagerly availed himself of this circumstance to regain the influence which he had lost over papal Europe.

He first instituted a rigid search for the authors of these obnoxious documents, and his agents succeeded in discovering six individuals who were declared to be implicated in the crime. He then instructed Jean du Bellay, the bishop of Paris, to order a solemn procession, in public reparation of the insult which had been offered to the most holy sacrament of the church; and not only travelled from Blois to Paris to assist at it in person, but was also accompanied by the queen and his three sons. The procession proceeded from the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois to the cathedral of Notre Dame; and the Eucharist was borne by the bishop attired in full pontificals, attended by a number of priests laden with relics. The king followed, with a lighted taper in his hand; the three princes and the Duke de Vendôme supported the canopy; and all the foreign ambassadors, cardinals, prelates, and nobility then resident in the capital closed the cortège. Nor did the king satisfy himself with this tacit demonstration of devotion; for, before the ceremonial was at an end, he publicly declared that, if his right arm were infected with the cancer of the new heresy, he would with his left hand lop it from his body; and that, in like case, he would not spare his own children.

Our next paragraph we must transcribe *verbatim et literatim* from Le Père Daniel, for we should be unable to find words of our own in which to record so horrible a butchery.

"The evening of the same day, the six culprits were conveyed to the public square, where fires had been

prepared to burn them. There was, in the centre of each pile, a sort of tall pulley, to which they were attached; the flames were then lighted beneath them, and the executioners, gently loosening the cord, allowed these wretches to descend sufficiently near to the fire for them to feel all its agony; then they were once more hoisted up; and after having made them suffer this cruel torment several times, they were flung into the midst of the flames, where they expired."

Sismondi (quoting from Jo. Sleidani) gives a somewhat different, although equally terrible, description of the instrument of torture. He says, speaking of the victims; "Had the people torn them to pieces, they would have shown them mercy; their ferocity would not have equalled that of the king. He had commanded that these unfortunates should be attached to a lofty machine; which was a beam so nicely balanced that, as it descended, it plunged them into the blaze of the pile, but rose again almost instantly, in order to prolong their sufferings, until, the flame seizing upon the cords by which they were bound, they fell into the middle of the fire."

"Six;" says Mezeray; "were burnt at Paris, and more than twice as many in several other places; but for two who were put to death, a hundred others rose from their ashes."

God be praised that it was so! For such enormities, perpetrated by such agents—a profligate king, a licentious prelacy, a venal and corrupted court—were assuredly more than enough to turn the hearts of the right-minded and the prayerful from a faith for which as there was no mercy, so also there could be no hope.

CHAPTER XI.

[1535-36.]

THE PERSECUTION OF THE PROTESTANTS IS CONTINUED—FRANCIS ABOLISHES PRINTING THROUGHOUT HIS KINGDOM—THE LEAGUE OF SMALKALDEN DECLARE AGAINST THE FRENCH KING—FRANCIS INVITES MELANCTHON TO FRANCE—FRANCIS DECLARES WAR AGAINST THE DUKE OF SAVOY—CHABOT OVERRUNS THE DUCHY—THE DUKE URGES THE EMPEROR TO ASSIST HIM—DEATH OF SFORZA—CHARLES V. RESTORES ALESSANDRO DE' MEDICI TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF FLORENCE—DEATH OF THE CHANCELLOR DUPRAT—THE QUEEN OF NAVARRE AT AMBOISE—OSTENTATION AND PROFLIGACY OF MADAME D'ETAMPES — THE TOURNAMENT — A STREET BRAWL—NARROW ESCAPE OF THE DUKE D'ANGOULÊME—REMOVAL OF THE COURT TO CHAMBORD—THE KING AND DIANA OF POITIERS—A MORAL MISSION—DIANA RESOLVES TO ATTEMPT THE CONQUEST OF THE DUKE D'ORLEANS—HER PERSONAL ATTRACTIONS—HER AMBITION—A POEM OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY—JEALOUSY OF THE DUCHESS D'ETAMPES — SHE DEMANDS THE EXILE OF DIANA FROM THE COURT—CHARLES V. OFFERS TO CONCEDE THE DUCHY OF MILAN TO THE DUKE D'ANGOULÊME—FRANCIS DEMANDS IT FOR THE DUKE D'ORLEANS — TERGIVERSATION OF THE EMPEROR—CHARLES V. RENEWS HIS ALLIANCE WITH THE VENETIANS—THE NEGOTIATION CONCERNING THE MILANESE IS RENEWED—THE EMPEROR PROCEEDS TO ROME—THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR URGES HIM TO PERFORM HIS PROMISES—CHARLES V. HARANGUES THE CONCLAVE, AND INSULTS FRANCIS—HE TEMPORISES WITH THE FRENCH AMBASSADORS—THE POPE ENDEAVOURS TO PACIFY THEM—THE ADDRESS TO THE CONCLAVE IS GARBLED AND FORWARDED TO FRANCE—MODERATION OF FRANCIS—THE CARDINAL DE LORRAINE IS DESPATCHED TO THE EMPEROR TO TERMINATE THE AFFAIR OF THE MILANESE, AND FAILS—IMPERIAL SUPERSTITION—TREASON OF THE MARQUIS DE SALUZZO — THE POPE DECLARES HIS NEUTRALITY—CHARLES V. EXCITES THE GERMAN PROTESTANTS AGAINST FRANCIS—THE ARMY IN SAVOY IS DISARMED—MONTMORENCI INSURES THE SAFETY OF THE FRONTIER—FRANCIS PROCEEDS TO LYONS—CHARLES V. DECLARES HIMSELF SUZERAIN OF PROVENCE—FRANCIS PREPARES FOR AN INVASION.

CHAPTER XI.

[1535-36.]

The year 1535 commenced by a new persecution of the Reformists. By order of the king, all those who had been arrested were put upon their trial, and many of them perished by the swinging beam described in the last chapter.

Francis was desirous to make his peace with the church; and notwithstanding the ambition which he still retained to be considered as the protector of letters, he was no sooner accused by Béda of favouring the new faith in compliance with the entreaties of his sister, than, after having, in the first burst of his indignation, caused him to be arrested, and imprisoned in the ecclesiastical dungeons, he condemned him to make the *amende honorable* before the church of Notre Dame, and to avow that he had spoken against the truth and the king. He however subsequently became alarmed lest this act of severity might fail to remove the impression produced upon the minds of those before whom Béda had asserted his heresy; and availing himself of the circumstance of the placards, to which we have alluded above, he—the proposed founder

of the royal college, the correspondent of Erasmus, and the successor of Loüis XII.—issued letters patent abolishing the use of the press, and forbidding the printing of any book, be it what it might, within the confines of the kingdom of France, upon pain of death! This retrogressive measure paralysed, as a natural consequence, the energies of all the learned men who had sought his court as an assured asylum; and it also produced another and very fatal result; for while Francis, by the blow which he thus struck at the very root of civilization, pacified the priesthood, the court of Rome, and the more fanatical of his subjects, he most imprudently and recklessly overlooked the probable effect of such proceedings upon the minds of the Protestant princes, whose continued alliance had become doubly valuable to him since he had resolved upon renewing the war against the emperor.

The conviction of his error was soon forced upon him. The enormous cruelties which he had perpetrated upon their co-religionists excited the horror and indignation of the members of the league of Smalkalden, who openly declared that the interests of their faith would be less endangered by their adherence to the house of Austria, than to those of a monarch whose barbarity had already sacrificed so many valuable lives.

In vain did Francis, anxious to regain the confidence of the German princes, address each separately, asserting that the culprits had suffered rather as political than as religious delinquents; in vain did he write to Melancthon with his own hand, entreating him to repair to France, and to discuss the subject of his faith with the doctors of the Sorbonne; assuring him that he did not consider

it impossible to unite the French and German churches; the league were not to be deluded by a subterfuge; and consequently, although when urged to the step by Luther, Melancthon consented to undertake the journey to France, in order, if possible, to prevent a recurrence of the butchery of the past months, the Elector of Saxony positively refused to permit him to take a step of such importance without the sanction of the emperor.

While thus occupied at home, Francis still maintained his resolution of once more invading the Milanese; and having authorized the Count Guillaume de Furstemberg to levy troops in Germany, he despatched the president Poyet to Savoy, to request from the duke a free passage for the French army through his territories. Charles of Savoy, however, at the instigation of his wife, refused to hearken to such a proposition, and his refusal so exasperated the king that he immediately declared war against him; upon which, Admiral de Brion Chabot, who, having entered Brescia, had taken possession of all the towns, none of which were garrisoned, thence proceeded to Savoy, where he made himself master of Chambery and Montmelian, with all the territory on that side of Mont Cenis.

The Duke of Savoy, alarmed by a promptitude of hostilities for which he was thoroughly unprepared, urged the emperor to lose no time in coming to his succour; and his ambassadors encountered Charles V. at Naples, where he had just disembarked amid the acclamations of the people, with the laurels recently gained at Tunis fresh upon his brow. The envoys of the duke were instructed to propose to the conqueror, with a view of inducing him

to espouse at once the interests of their master, the exchange of Nice, and other territories then in the possession of the duke on the French side of the Alps, against such as might be afterwards agreed upon between them; an offer which augmented at once the anger and the alarm of Francis, as the cession of these particular portions of the duchy of Savoy opened up a way into his own kingdom, of which the emperor could avail himself at his pleasure, by invading Dauphiny and Provence, and thus securing an entrance into the very heart of France.

This negotiation was, however, abandoned, the death of Francisco Sforza, which occurred just at this period, having arrested the proceedings of Chabot; who, as well as the king his master, anticipated that the duke having died without issue, the claim of the French princes would no longer be disputed by the emperor; and that, consequently, it would be mere wanton cruelty to take cities by force which must ere long recognise their legitimate sovereign in the person of Francis. Both the one and the other had, however, forgotten that ambition was no less the ruling passion of Charles than of his rival; and that he was little likely at the very proudest moment of his life, to detach one gem from the coronal which he wore with so much jealousy.

Nor did the feeling evinced by the Neapolitans when, by the death of Sforza, they saw the duchy of Milan about to fall once more into his hands, and ascertained that the same distrust and dissatisfaction had manifested itself throughout the whole of the Italian states, tend to render the emperor more compliant. He had entered Naples as the protector of Christendom against the

Infidels; his train had been swelled by the ambassadors of all the princes of Italy, who had submitted to him, as to a supreme arbitrator, their several subjects of dispute and misunderstanding; the Florentine patriots had appealed to him to re-establish them as a republic, and they had yielded passively to his will when he insisted upon confirming Alessandro de' Medici[1] in his sovereignty, stained as he was with crime; and moreover, as an earnest of his favour, guaranteed to him, in accordance with a pledge already given, the hand of his natural daughter Marguerite; to whom the duke was subsequently married on the 28th of February, 1536.

On the 8th of July of the year which we are now recording (1535), France was delivered from an unjust minister in the person of the chancellor Duprat, who expired of phthyriasis, at his château at Nantouillet, in intense suffering, not less of mind than of body; the agony of the hideous disease to which he fell a victim being even exceeded by the torments of a guilty and remorseful conscience, which vented itself in tears and groans, but to which he had listened too late. He was

[1] Alessandro de' Medici was the son of Lorenzo II, Duke of Urbino, or, as some historians assert, the natural son of Clement VII. He was forced upon the Florentines by Charles V, in 1532, as their duke, and the succession secured to his children. His tyranny and extortion caused him to be universally detested, while his cruelty made him the scourge of the duchy, and the terror of all by whom he was surrounded. He caused the death, by poison, of the Cardinal Hyppolito de' Medici, the son of Julio II, and grandson of Lorenzo I, surnamed the Great. He married Marguerite d'Autriche, the natural daughter of Charles V, in 1536, and was assassinated in the following year, by Lorenzino de' Medici, the son of Lorenzo III, and grandson of Pietro Francisco.

succeeded in the chancellorship by Antoine du Bourg, the president of the parliament of Paris.

The court was at this period sojourning at Amboise, where the Queen of Navarre was on a visit; and her arrival had been hailed as the occasion for a succession of festivities, at which the Duchess d'Etampes openly presided. The favour of Anne de Pisseleu had now reached its extreme point. She had enriched and ennobled her family; she had seen herself powerful enough to assume the place, and almost to usurp the dignity, of the wife of the sovereign; she had secured the friendship of Catherine de' Medici; and she had become the dispenser of all the royal bounties. Many a noble courtier assumed her colours in the lists, and many a titled abbot was content to stand beside her at her toilette. None cared to remember that her life was one of the most unblushing licentiousness; and while the rabble of the Pré-aux-Clercs bandied her name among them like that of the vilest of her sex, and made her profligate adventures the theme of their ribald gossipry, there was neither prince nor prelate at the court who did not obey her behest as though it had been that of an oracle.

Among other entertainments ostensibly provided for the amusement of the king's sister, a tournament was held in the great court of the castle, at which all the nobles and gentlemen then resident at Amboise were invited to assist. Not only the princes, but even the king himself, had in turn taken their place in the lists, and the Duke d'Angoulême had particularly distinguished himself by his prowess. Of all his children, Charles d'Angoulême, his younger son, was the especial favourite

of Francis, whom he greatly resembled both in person and temperament. Impulsive, reckless, and daring, he despised alike danger and difficulty; while, even although yet a boy in years, he had already seriously attached himself to one of the most beautiful women of the court. Unlike the dauphin, he was fair with a profusion of light hair, and dark blue eyes, one of which he had, however, lost at an early age from the effects of small-pox. His ardent love of all warlike amusements and field sports; his frankness, courage, and gallant bearing, had greatly endeared him to the king, who was repelled by the cold stateliness of the dauphin, and irritated by the heavy and unsocial manners of the Duke d'Orleans. Nevertheless, Francis occasionally endeavoured to restrain the impetuosity of the young prince, but with little effect; and his feeling of exultation on the occasion to which we are now referring, was so unbounded when he found himself the hero of the day, that it betrayed him into an imprudence which had nearly cost him his life.

The fatigue that he had undergone in the lists, and his consequent exhaustion, induced the young prince to swallow a large goblet of spiced wine a few moments before the king rose from the supper-table; and this insidious draught acted the more potently upon him from the fact that he had previously pledged the flatterers, by whom he was surrounded, with more than sufficient vigour. In this state of excitement he no sooner ascertained from one of the chamberlains that the monarch had retired to his apartment, than he rose abruptly from his seat, exclaiming to a group of wild young courtiers who were in attendance upon him; "Now then, gentle-

men; his majesty is safe for the night, and we are the lords of Amboise. Let us go and take the air upon the bridge, and see if we cannot thrash some of the rascally lacqueys who amuse themselves by stopping up the thoroughfare, and striking those who thrust them aside."

This proposal met with unanimous applause; and the hot-headed young prince, and his equally wild companions, at once sallied from the palace, and rushed upon the lounging group on the bridge, who, being in the service of the court, and many among them even in that of the king himself, all carried arms. The darkness of the night rendered it impossible for them to recognise their assailants; and, consequently, when the Duke d'Angoulême, at the head of his little party, fell upon them sword in hand, they defended themselves vigorously; while, as he persisted in retaining his position, he soon became the principal object of their attack; until at length a stroke was aimed at him with so sure a hand, that M. de Castelnau, a Gascon noble, and one of his favourite companions, had only time to throw himself between the duke and his antagonist, and to receive the blow intended for his master, at whose feet he fell dead upon the instant. At once sobered and heart-stricken at the result of his imprudence, the young prince shouted imperiously; "Put up your swords, gentlemen; I am the Duke d'Angoulême."

At this startling announcement every weapon was withdrawn; and in a few seconds the bleeding body of the faithful and devoted Castelnau, the victim of this ignoble broil, was surrounded only by the prince and his followers. Charles d'Angoulême, as he bent over him,

shed tears of unaffected sorrow, as sincere as they were unavailing; he did not even seek to ascertain by whose hand his friend had fallen, for he was self-convicted; and he could not disguise from himself that he had been more guilty than the actual murderer.

In order to dissipate the annoyance which he felt at this disgraceful adventure, and if possible to overcome the gloom which the fate of a friend to whom he had been greatly attached, had shed over the spirits of the young prince, the king, after having severely reprimanded his son, removed with the court to Chambord; and it was, probably, the dread which he felt lest the hitherto lively youth should belie the promise of his boyhood, that led him to observe, even more closely than ever, the demeanour of his other sons. On one occasion, as he was leaning over the balcony of the great hall, watching the three princes who were engaged at tennis in the court below, he turned suddenly towards the Grande Sénéchale who was standing near him, and motioning to her to advance, he directed her attention to the listlessness with which the Duke d'Angoulême was pursuing the game.

"I scarcely recognise him;" he said with a sigh; "his natural enthusiasm is quenched. Even the dauphin exhibits more excitement."

"Give him time, Sire;" replied Diana de Poitiers soothingly; "he is young, and he has lost a friend. "His royal highness loved M. de Castelnau."

"Doubtlessly you are right, Madame;" acquiesced the king. "At least you are an admirable consoler, and I dare not doubt your words. He *is* young, and we know that time cures all evils."

"Not all, Sire."

Francis looked at her steadfastly. "You are right again, Madame; not all. There are certain evils which time and memory can only canker; and others for which it affords no hope. You see the dauphin. Time fails to make a Frenchman of the Spaniard."

"Monseigneur is grave beyond his years, assuredly, Sire;" said Madame de Brézé; "but his mind is all nobleness."

"And Henry, Madam? what will you say of Henry?" asked the king almost peevishly; "For my own part, I despair of him. Since his marriage he has become more unsocial and unpracticable than ever."

"Surely your majesty did not anticipate that a wife would render him more frank and joyous;" said Diana with a slight accent of sarcasm; "For the Duke d'Orleans there was no cure but love."

"Aha! is it so, fair Diana?" asked Francis, suddenly roused into excitement; "then we have committed a fatal error, for I fear that love and marriage are almost incompatible."

The beautiful widow was silent.

"Catherine is, however, handsome enough to animate a statue;" pursued the king; "it can scarcely be difficult to love her."

"True;" said Madame de Brézé, with an arch look; "but love cannot be compelled; make it a duty, and it turns to loathing."

"He is, then, irreclaimable?"

"By no means. A sincere and ardent passion would arouse him from his present apathy; for none love more deeply than those who resist moral coercion."

"On the faith of a gentleman, you possess more wisdom, Madame, handsome as you are;" exclaimed Francis energetically; "than all the doctors of the Sorbonne. I only wish that some one as fair and as fascinating as yourself would undertake his conversion. I should be her debtor beyond all requital."

"The experiment might at least be tried;" murmured Diana, twisting her pearl châtelaine about her taper fingers.

"But by whom?" asked the king; "For such an undertaking it would require a miracle to ensure success. If, indeed, *you* could be prevailed upon to sacrifice yourself—"

"Your majesty does not possess a more devoted servant than Diana de Poitiers."

"I know it, Madame; I know it;" said Francis, as a strange expression passed over his face; "and I am equally aware that you at least could not fail; but perhaps, the past—"

"Do you fear, Sire;" asked the Grande Sénéchale with an ironical smile; "that the memory of M. de Brézé—"

The king forced an uneasy laugh, as he hastily replied without awaiting the conclusion of her inquiry; "I have no such apprehension, fair lady; therefore let the old Sénéchal rest in peace. We will revert no more to bygone years; nothing is so idle as retrospection; while as regards the future I do not for a moment doubt your power, and only wish that it could be successfully exerted."

"Your wishes are my law, Sire;" was the rejoinder of the fair widow, as her rich lips parted in affected

merriment; "but Madame d'Etampes is approaching, and I will no longer intrude upon your majesty."

"The duchess is jealous;" said the royal libertine, as he acknowledged her parting curtsey; "and we must not violate the proprieties at Chambord. I will not detain you, Madame la Grande Sénéchale," and as Diana moved away, the favourite advanced to the balcony; a liberty upon which the neglected queen would have feared to venture.

At this period the widow of Louis de Brézé had already attained her thirty-first year, while the prince Henry was only in his seventeenth; and at the first glance it would appear as though so formidable a disparity of age must have rendered any attempt on her part to engage the affections of so mere a youth alike abortive and ridiculous; but so perfectly had she preserved even the youthful bloom which had added so much to her attractions on her first appearance at court, that she appeared ten years younger than she actually was. Her features were regular and classical; her complexion faultless; her hair of a rich purple black, which took a golden tint in the sunshine; while her teeth, her ankle, her hands and arms, and her bust, were each in their turn the theme of the court poets. That the extraordinary and almost fabulous duration of her beauty was in a great degree due to the precautions which she adopted, there can be little doubt, for she spared no effort to secure it; she was jealously careful of her health, and in the most severe weather bathed in cold water; she suffered no cosmetic to approach her, denouncing every compound of the kind as worthy only of those to whom nature had been so

niggardly as to compel them to complete her imperfect work; she rose every morning at six o'clock, and had no sooner left her chamber than she sprang into the saddle, and after having galloped a league or two returned to her bed, where she remained until midday engaged in reading. The system appears a singular one, but in her case it undoubtedly proved successful, as after having enslaved the Duke d'Orleans in her thirty-first year, she still reigned in absolute sovereignty over the heart of the King of France when she had nearly reached the age of sixty! It is certain, however, that the magnificent Diana owed no small portion of this extraordinary and unprecedented constancy to the charms of her mind and the brilliancy of her intellect.

The short dialogue between Francis and herself which we have given above, inspired the ambitious widow with new ideas and aspirations. Hitherto she had been content to await a reaction in the heart of Francis himself. She did not believe that Madame d'Etampes could long conceal from him the extent of her profligacy; and well aware that should the favourite be disgraced her successor would soon be determined, she contented herself by exerting all her fascinations against the facile heart of the monarch, and watching for the hour of her own triumph.

The few sentences which had passed in the balcony, however, had sufficed to open up a new career before her. That the king had spoken rather in bitter mirth than in sober seriousness, she was well aware; but this conviction failed to shake her purpose. The saturnine and forbidding nature of the Duke d'Orleans moreover rendered the task which she was about to undertake

one of no common difficulty, but this very consciousness piqued her vanity, and determined her to persevere.

The prince was at first annoyed, and even abashed, at the undisguised preference exhibited towards him by the most beautiful woman at court; but Diana soon succeeded in subjugating his heart through his vanity. Conscious that he possessed neither the dignity of the dauphin, nor the frank gracefulness of his younger brother, Henri d'Orleans had hitherto carefully avoided the society of the opposite sex; and had even received the hand of his wife with a marked repugnance which had drawn down upon him the displeasure of the king; but he soon found that there was no resisting the seductions of a syren, who while she looked into his face with the brightest smile and the most brilliant eyes in the world, discovered in himself a thousand estimable qualities and personal attractions to which he had never dreamt he could advance any claim.

That he did not long combat his growing passion is evident from a poem addressed to him by his fair and frail conquest only a few weeks subsequently; and this production, extracted from the MSS. of the Bibliothèque Royale, is so characteristic alike of the taste and the morals of the time, that we offer no apology for its insertion.

"Voicy vraisment qu'Amour un beau matin
S'en vint m'offrir flourette très gentille,
——Là, se prit-il, a ournez vostre teint
Et vistement violiers et jonquille
Me rejetoit, à tant, que ma mantille
En estoit pleine, et mon cœur se pasmoit;
(Car, voyez-vous, flourette si gentille
Estois garçon frais, dispos, et jeunnet).

Ains tremblottante et destournant les yeux . . . .
Nenni . . . disois-je . . . Ah, ne serez déçue,
Reprit Amour, et soudain à ma vue
Va présentant un laurier merveilleux.
—— Mieux vault, lui dis-je, estre sasge que Royne
Ains me sentis et fraimir et trembler,
Diane faillist, et comprendrez sans peine
Duquel matin je praitends reparler."

What effect the triumph of Madame de Brézé over the heart of the prince produced upon the mind of the king, the old chronicler who dilates complaisantly upon all the preceding details does not inform us; but the impression which it made upon Madame d'Etampes soon became apparent, and was destined to exert a most unhappy influence over the fortunes of the nation. The first weapon which the haughty favourite wielded against the mature mistress of the young duke was that of ridicule. She affected to discredit the report that M. d'Orleans could be enthralled by the antiquated charms of a "wrinkled old woman;" and in support of her argument, amused herself by asserting that she was born in the same year in which the daughter of St. Vallier had espoused the Grand Sénéchal of Normandy. Of course she found many and attentive auditors, not one of whom attempted to disprove her words, although all were aware that Madame de Brézé was the senior of the duchess only by seven years. She next attacked the person of her victim, forewarning those who were bold enough to uphold her claims to admiration, that the beauty of which she was so vain was known to be the result of sorcery, and that they would ere long see it vanish as mysteriously as it had been bestowed. Diana, however, was not to be

conquered by means so puerile as these; and, secure of the affections and support of the prince, she treated the calumnies of her persecutor with proud and silent disdain.

The nature of Madame d'Etampes was ill calculated to brook this tacit assumption of superiority; and foiled in her efforts to rid herself of the intrusive beauty by her own agency, she carried her vindictiveness so far as to demand of the king that he should exile Madame de Brézé from the court; but Francis, who had already began to congratulate himself upon the altered deportment of the duke, which he attributed entirely to the influence exerted over him by Diana, refused to accede to her wishes; reminding her that while the Duchess d'Orleans uttered no complaint, and continued to exhibit towards the Grande Sénéchale the same consideration and regard as ever, it was impossible that he could interfere to prevent the progress of the *liaison*. Not even this declaration could, however, discourage the pertinacious favourite, who thenceforward studiously avoided all reference to Diana herself, but strenuously endeavoured to disparage the duke in the eyes of his royal father; drawing invidious comparisons between that prince and the dauphin; and seeking by every means in her power to crush his rapidly increasing favour.

It must not, nevertheless, be supposed, that although Madame de Brézé possessed sufficient self-command to exhibit nothing save contempt towards the vindictive duchess, she did not acutely feel, and bitterly resent the sarcasms of which she had been made the subject. Jealous of the superior power of the royal mistress, and exasperated by her insults, even while she displayed

worldly wisdom enough patiently to abide her time of vengeance, her heart was to the full as much agitated by hatred as that of Anne de Pisseleu herself; and a conviction that such must in reality be the case once more divided the court into two separate factions, which the doubtful aspect of public affairs alone tended to render for a time innoxious.

Anxious if possible to avoid a war with Francis, while still apprehensive of a Turkish invasion, and awaiting a favourable opportunity to subjugate the princes of the Protestant league, whom he regarded as rebels alike against his own authority and that of the church; and, moreover, alarmed by the rapid spread of Lutheranism in the Low Countries, Charles determined rather to temporize with his rival on the subject of the duchy of Milan, than by an abrupt rejection of his claim to excite him to hostilities; and accordingly he informed the Sire de Velly, who was awaiting him at Naples with the congratulations of the French king upon his victories in Africa, that he was willing to cede the Milanese to one of the sons of Francis, on condition that the duchy should remain a distinct sovereignty, and that Germany and France should become so closely allied by marriage as to prevent the possibility of future aggression on either side.

He declared, moreover, that he was so sincere in this declaration, that he should take no steps towards the disposal of the province until he received the reply of the king upon three points on which he was anxious to ascertain his intentions. Namely, whether he were prepared to lend his assistance against the Turks; to compel the Protestant princes to revert to the Romanist

religion; and to co-operate with him in the pacification of all Christendom. Should Francis accede to these terms, he asserted that he was ready to bestow the duchy upon Charles, the younger of the three princes, on condition that the Duke d'Orleans should accompany him to the siege of Algiers.

As he had anticipated, however, Francis, while he consented to the three points upon which he had first insisted, refused to comply with those which regarded his sons; and he instructed M. de Velly to explain to the emperor that he desired the Milanese for the Duke d'Orleans, and that he was ready to offer four hundred thousand crowns of gold for the investiture; directing him at the same time to press for a reply. When this decision was made known to him, Charles contented himself by vague declarations of his good faith, and evaded a direct answer; while the measures which he meanwhile adopted augured ill for the success of the negotiation. He had not only purchased the fealty of Alessandro de' Medici by a marriage which at once flattered his vanity and secured his sovereignty, but he also entered into a new league with the Venetians; who, dazzled by his triumphs in Africa, and induced by the persuasions of the Duke d'Urbino, once more declared themselves his allies; while he directed the Dowager-Queen of Hungary, who had succeeded to the government of the Low Countries on the death of Marguerite of Austria, as well as his lieutenants in Spain, to make levies both of men and money; while he was himself occupied in raising supplies throughout Naples and Sicily, and in the reinforcement of his African army.

Francis, nevertheless, deluded himself with the belief, that as the emperor had spontaneously offered the duchy of Milan to his third son, (a concession which he could only attribute to his reluctance to renew the war,) he would, when he became convinced that he had no other alternative, ultimately consent to transfer it to the Duke d'Orleans; or even, should he insist upon such an arrangement, to himself. He was at this period suffering from severe illness at Dijon; and was totally unprepared for the communication which he received from De Velly, to the effect that the emperor had declared, that had he been aware of the rigorous treatment which the Duke of Savoy had experienced at the hands of the French king, he should never have condescended to the proposition which he had made, but that having mooted the subject he would not retract his offer; while he trusted that his forbearance would induce Francis to arrange matters in Savoy, and to act with similar consistency.

The negotiation was consequently continued, but the position of the two potentates was no longer the same. Charles had by this clever policy gained a supremacy far greater than it at first appeared to be; and he continued to make strenuous exertions to protect himself in the event of any aggressive measures on the part of his rival. He revealed to the pope the correspondence into which he had entered with the French king, and made the same overtures to him which he had made to Francis; while he, moreover, volunteered to renew his old friendship with Henry VIII, alleging that the death of his aunt had removed the cause of dissatisfaction which had induced him to abandon the interests of England for

those of France; and that he, consequently, felt himself at liberty to recur to his former and more genial associations.

These important steps once taken he proceeded to Rome with great pomp, where he remained for thirteen days, holding constant conferences with the pontiff; and finally requested him to summon the cardinals and foreign ministers, before whom, bareheaded, and with his plumed hat in his hand, he indulged in the most unmeasured invectives and menaces against Francis; recapitulating all the grievances of which he had to complain; accusing him of constantly infringing the peace upon frivolous pretexts, of falsifying his word, of troubling the tranquillity of both Italy and Germany, and of persecuting the Duke of Savoy; and ultimately concluding his harangue, by declaring that the French king must either consent to accept the Duchy of Milan for his younger son upon the conditions which he had stipulated, or meet him in single combat with sword and dagger, on the recognised and solemn pledge that the successful combatant should, with all the resources he could command, and under the orders of the sovereign-pontiff, undertake a crusade against the Infidels, or engage in a war which could end only in the total ruin of one of the two powers.

At this period of his speech, he also suffered his irritation to betray him into an insult towards the French army as unjust as it was offensive; for, in alluding to the result of the late hostilities, he exclaimed; "If I had no better soldiers than those of Francis, I would forthwith go with my hands tied, and a halter about my neck, and implore the mercy of my enemy."

This address having been delivered in the Spanish language was very imperfectly understood by either M. de Velly, or the Bishop of Maçon, the French ambassador at the papal court; but the extraordinary and unaccustomed vehemence of Charles, and the few sentences which they were enabled to connect, rendered them suspicious that a public affront had been offered to their sovereign; whereupon they demanded an audience of the emperor on the following morning, and required to be informed if they had rightly interpreted his words, and if they were empowered to inform their master that his imperial majesty had defied him to single combat. Charles, in reply, assured them that he had in no way assailed the honour of their sovereign, although he had justified himself; and declared that he should be deeply hurt were his words misconstrued, as he had a great esteem for the king his brother, and had never had cause of complaint against him.

De Velly had, a day or two previously, urged him afresh upon the subject of the negotiation, when he became irritated, and demanded impetuously;—"And you who are so importunate, have you authority to conclude the treaty?"

The royal envoy admitted that he was invested with no such powers; but added that the Admiral Brion de Chabot and the Cardinal de Lorraine were already on their way, and fully accredited.

"Such being the case;" broke in Charles; "as you have no power to act, by what right do you tell me that I give you nothing but words, when in point of fact it is your own case towards me? But of those I have

already given you so many, that I shall waste no more until you are authorized to complete the negotiation."

On ascertaining the result of their audience, the pontiff frankly declared to the French ambassadors, that he saw no prospect whatever of a successful issue to so intricate an affair; and that he was satisfied the emperor was merely amusing them by words in order to gain time, for that he never would be induced to cede Milan to the Duke d'Orleans, who, in the event of his surviving the dauphin, would thus merge the duchy in the crown of France.

Moreover, there could be no doubt that the sudden violence betrayed by Charles in the assembly, when his previous policy had been to temporize, was occasioned by the intelligence which had just reached him, that Francis, wearied by his procrastination, had authorized his generals to pursue their operations in Piedmont, which they had done so successfully as to compel his brother-in-law the Duke of Savoy to fly.

That he instantly repented is sufficiently evident however from his conduct on the morrow, when he endeavoured once more to cajole the French ambassadors as he had previously done; but the time for forbearance, as was evident to all the foreign ministers who had been present at the meeting, was now past; and they accordingly did not lose a moment in writing to their several courts to prepare them for the war which appeared inevitable; and that the impression produced upon the mind of the sovereign-pontiff was precisely similar, was made apparent by the fact that he summoned M. de Velly and the Bishop of Maçon to his presence the same evening,

and endeavoured by every argument he could advance to dissuade them from any act of impetuosity which might tend to augment the animosity of their sovereign against the emperor, and thus disturb a peace, of which Europe had only just begun to reap the benefit. He did not conceal his own displeasure at the intemperate language uttered by Charles; but he entreated them to palliate it in their report; and, if possible, to avert the peril by which the whole of Christendom was threatened.

In reply, the French envoys respectfully but firmly represented to His Holiness, that they had no alternative save to render a faithful account to their sovereign of all that had occurred, the insult having been too public to afford a chance of its concealment; but they, nevertheless, willingly consented to use the greatest circumspection, and to abstain from all comment which might aggravate the evil; reminding the pope, moreover, that his own neutrality would tend more powerfully to secure the maintenance of peace than any other measure. This Clement at once promised to observe; and the ambassadors so far complied with his request as to modify certain expressions uttered by the emperor, while they omitted no portion of his after-explanation; and as, upon their application for a copy of the address which he had delivered in the assembly, they were informed by the imperial ministers that it had been already forwarded to Leidekerke, the ambassador of Charles V. at the French court, by whom it was to be presented to the king, they felt assured that the more temperate language they had adopted would not be gainsaid by the official document.

Such indeed proved to be the case, for the ameliorations which had been made by all parties had so much weakened the offensive character of the emperor's address, that the reply of Francis was extremely temperate. He declared the treaty of Madrid to be invalid, inasmuch as he had acted under constraint; while as regarded the renewed proposal of the duel, he asserted that he did not consider himself to have received a challenge, the emperor having stated that his words had been misconstrued, and that he had no such intention; although, had he not been dissuaded by his ministers, he would have accepted it with pleasure if it could have tended to spare the blood of his subjects.

This answer, which astonished as much as it disappointed those who believed that he was too high-hearted to brook a second affront of so marked and unmeasured a nature, Francis communicated to all the foreign courts whose ministers had been present at the harangue of the emperor; and at the same time he despatched the Cardinal de Lorraine to Piedmont in order to stay the progress of his army, that Charles might have no plausible pretext for entering upon hostilities. Thence the prelate proceeded to Sienna, where the emperor was at that period sojourning; and having obtained an audience, he respectfully reminded him of his promise to cede the duchy of Milan to the French prince.

The demeanour of Charles V. was cold and calm. He said that he had only made the concession under certain conditions, which had been infringed by the invasion of the territories of his vassal the Duke of Savoy; but that

he was, nevertheless, willing to perform his promise in favour of Charles d'Angoulême; and to give him, moreover, one of his nieces in marriage.

The cardinal in reply stated that his instructions were to demand the investiture of the Duke d'Orleans; and that should his imperial majesty withhold his assent to that arrangement, he was commanded to proceed to Rome to acquaint the sovereign-pontiff with the failure of the negotiation.

Charles, with a faint smile which conveyed more of contempt than courtesy, merely retorted by bidding him farewell, and assuring him that he should see him with pleasure on his return; and thus civilly dismissed, M. de Lorraine at once proceeded on his journey to Rome. Late events had rendered the emperor more impracticable than ever; and since he had seen the armies of the sultan and Barbarossa flee before him, he had begun to entertain the idea that he was destined to be invincible; a delusion in which he was strengthened by the predictions of the astrologers, who early in the present year (1536) had put forth the most extraordinary statements concerning him. What some had merely advanced from a desire of flattering his vanity, others soon affected to confirm in order to further their personal interests; and these extravagant fallacies were industriously circulated throughout Europe, where they produced an impression difficult to understand in the present day.

Among others who were infected with the weakness of believing that it was useless to contend against one whose destiny had been declared by the stars, was the

Marquis de Saluzzo; who, not content with the mere treachery which he meditated, remained for some time with the French troops, in order to ascertain their proposed plan of operations, and thus to render himself more welcome to the new master, to whom he had resolved to transfer his services.

The mission of the Cardinal de Lorraine to the pope meanwhile produced no effect upon the timid nature of Paul III; who admitted the justice of his representations and the bad faith of the emperor, but persisted in declaring that he should content himself by remaining neuter, and would not engage either himself, or the Roman states, in a war which he deprecated. With this unsatisfactory reply the French cardinal was accordingly compelled to quit Rome; nor did he fare better upon his parting interview with Charles V, who affected great moderation and an earnest desire for peace; but who had, in fact, matured his plans, and was about to put them into operation.

In addition to the astrological predictions to which we have already alluded, the emperor had been careful to circulate throughout Germany exaggerated accounts of the cruelties which Francis had committed against the Protestants within his kingdom, already sufficiently atrocious without the aid of fiction; and the detail was rendered the more revolting to his German subjects by the assertion that all the victims were of their own nation; that all Germans were banished from France, and that the French king had entered into a league with the Infidels, by whom he was to be assisted in the invasion of their empire. As the necessity of disabusing the

German people soon became fearfully apparent, Francis deputed Guillaume du Bellay Langei to explain to them the fallacy of these mischievous misrepresentations; and that wise and upright minister ultimately succeeded, although not without great difficulty, in convincing them that their credulity had been abused.

Meanwhile, the Cardinal de Lorraine, on his return to France, had an interview with the king on the 17th of May, in which he assured him that there could no longer exist a doubt, from the preparations made by the emperor, that he meditated the invasion not only of Piedmont, but even of France itself.

By a singular and unaccountable fatality, Francis only a short time previously, when he should have become more than ever suspicious of an enemy by whom he had been so frequently deceived; who had wantonly insulted him in the face of all Europe; and who had spent the last few months in the most active preparations for war; had persisted, in defiance of his counsellors, in disarming his troops in Savoy, as though by such means he could compel a peace; but Montmorenci, justly alarmed by an imprudence which he foresaw might involve the safety of the kingdom of France, having earnestly represented the peril of such a measure, the king was at length reluctantly induced to authorize him to direct Brion Chabot, if he desired really to serve his sovereign, to fortify some of the strongest places which he then held, in order that his troops might be secure of a refuge in the event of the emperor's descent upon Piedmont.

Thus forewarned, Chabot lost no time in fortifying Turin, garrisoning Ivrée with a force of two thousand

men, and planning a camp on the Pô; after which he wrote to entreat Francis not to terminate his negotiation with the emperor for the space of another month, as he should require that time to complete his defensive operations; and the king being anxious to render Charles the aggressor, convinced as he now was that he could no longer avoid a renewal of hostilities, at once acceded to this arrangement; instructing Chabot at the same time to abandon all idea of forming an encampment, and to confine himself to the completion of his fortifications, which were to be further strengthened by an immediate reinforcement of fifteen thousand infantry, and certain squadrons of horse, and brigades of artillery, each under the command of its particular chief, and in readiness to march against the imperialists at an hour's notice.

He also despatched instructions to the governors of Picardy and Champagne to garrison their frontier-fortresses with a force of fourteen thousand men, who were to await within the walls such orders as he might find it expedient hereafter to issue. The defence of Guyenne was intrusted to the King of Navarre; that of Dauphiny to M. d'Humieres, a tried and brave general; Barbesieux[1] was sent to Marseilles to protect that city against the anticipated attack of the Genoese admiral, Doria; and Francis himself, once more awakened from his dreams of pleasure and intrigue, repaired in person to Lyons with the main body of his army, to resist the attempt of the emperor to invade Provence, of which he had declared

[1] Antoine de la Rochefoucauld, Seigneur de Barbesieux, General of the Galleys in 1528, was a descendant of the Langeac branch of that distinguished family. He died in 1537.

himself the sovereign by virtue of a cession that he affirmed to have been made to him of that province by the Connétable de Bourbon, as well as by other rights which he did not condescend to explain.

Unaware that his descent upon this particular point had been anticipated, Charles V. was prepared for an easy conquest. He had, or feigned to have, emissaries in all the principal cities; and confidently asserted that the consternation of the inhabitants, the weakness of the several garrisons, and the dilapidated condition of the fortifications, rendered his success certain. The precautions which had been hastily but efficiently taken were, however, destined to convince him of his error. The French king, warned by past experience, had left nothing to chance which could be secured by prudence. Marseilles, Arles, Tarascon, and Beaucaire were all strongly defended. The minor cities, which were unprovided with the means of resistance, were swept of their inhabitants; the adjacent country was laid waste; the mills, the grain, and every agrarian edible which could not be conveyed away, was burnt, and all supplies cut off against the arrival of the enemy. An encampment was then formed near Cavaillon, between the Rhone and the Durance, of which the Maréchal de Montmorenci took the command, while with the other moiety of his army Francis established his own quarters at Valence; and thus prepared, he awaited the advent of the imperial forces.

CHAPTER XII.

[1536.]

THE EMPEROR BESIEGES TURIN—THE FORTRESS OF FOSSANO IS ENTRUSTED BY FRANCIS I. TO THE MARQUIS DE SALUZZO—HE IMPEDES THE PROGRESS OF THE WORKS—THE FRENCH OFFICERS SUSPECT HIS GOOD FAITH—HE RETIRES TO RAVAL—HE BETRAYS HIS TRUST—ANTONIO DA LEYVA INVESTS FOSSANO —THE MARQUIS DE SALUZZO IS APPOINTED THE EMPEROR'S LIEUTENANT BEYOND THE ALPS—CHARLES V. INVADES PROVENCE—M. DE MONTEJAN IS SURPRISED, AND MADE PRISONER BY THE IMPERIALISTS—EMPTY BOASTING OF THE EMPEROR—DEATH OF THE DAUPHIN BY POISON—TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF MONTECUCULLI — FRANCIS ACCUSES THE IMPERIALISTS OF INSTIGATING THE MURDER—INDIGNATION OF CHARLES V. AND HIS GENERALS—CATHERINE DE' MEDICI IS IN HER TURN ACCUSED BY DA LEYVA —PROGRESS OF THE IMPERIAL ARMY—THE EMPEROR ENTERS AIX—PRINCE HENRY JOINS THE FRENCH CAMP—MARSEILLES SUCCESSFULLY RESISTS THE IMPERIALISTS—FRANCIS DETERMINES TO HEAD THE ARMY IN PERSON—HE IS DISSUADED BY HIS GENERALS—DORIA SUPPLIES THE EMPEROR'S CAMP —RETREAT OF CHARLES V.—THE TOWER OF MUY—THE IMPERIAL FORCES ESTABLISH THEMSELVES IN SAVOY—THE EMPEROR PROCEEDS TO SPAIN— IS OVERTAKEN BY A STORM—THE VICTOR AND THE VANQUISHED.

CHAPTER XII.

[1536.]

THESE measures were by no means premature; as Charles, having engaged to re-establish the Duke of Savoy in his dominions, had already despatched an army under the command of Antonio da Leyva to besiege Turin, while Francis had instructed his generals to abandon all their other conquests in Piedmont, and to confine their operations to ensuring the security of that city, and the fortresses of Coni and Fossano; the latter of which places he confided to the keeping of the Marquis de Saluzzo, with strict directions to increase its strength and means of resistance to the utmost extent of his abilities.

We have already recorded the meditated treachery of the marquis; who accordingly no sooner found himself in a position to serve his new sovereign, than he commenced his operations by impeding the exertions of the engineers, preventing the entrance of provisions and ammunition into the town, and delaying by every subterfuge which he could invent the efforts of the French officers to complete the defence of the place. Suspicions of his good faith, however, were soon entertained; and, alarmed by the hostile demonstrations of those about

him, he abruptly withdrew to his estate at Raval, declaring that as his authority was not recognised, he would not be responsible for the result.

Baffled at Turin, he no sooner found himself beyond the vengeance of the French officers than he wrote to apprise the imperialist general of the unprotected state of Fossano, and to urge him to take possession of the fortress before the enemy had time to strengthen it. Antonio da Leyva did not hesitate for an instant; but availing himself of this unexpected and welcome intelligence, he left a force of ten thousand horse and a few squadrons of cavalry before Turin, under the command of his lieutenant, and marched upon the betrayed city, before which he sat down, in the full conviction that it would become an easy prey.

Ill-supplied and unprepared as they were, however, the garrison defended themselves with great courage and pertinacity; and even when they were compelled to capitulate, from the utter hopelessness of overcoming a force which quadrupled their own, and which was moreover well provided both with provisions and artillery, they stipulated that they should hold the fortress for the space of a month longer, at the termination of which time they were to vacate it if they failed to receive succour from without. As he believed all external aid to be impossible at the moment, Da Leyva consented to these terms, and meanwhile attempted the conquest of two other towns in the neighbourhood, but without success; and a few days before that which had been named for the surrender of Fossano, the emperor arrived in person at Savillano, where he accepted the fealty of the

Marquis de Saluzzo, and appointed him his lieutenant beyond the Alps.

Then and there it was that Charles V, intoxicated by his late successes, imparted to his generals the design which he had formed of invading Provence; nor would he be turned from his purpose either by their sober arguments or their vehement expostulations. In vain did Antonio da Leyva even kneel at his feet, imploring him not to endanger his military reputation by so dangerous a measure; he remained deaf to every persuasion, and made immediate preparations for carrying his intention into effect. His army consisted of ten thousand horse, and between forty and fifty thousand infantry; a force with which, as we have already stated, he anticipated that he should be enabled without difficulty to possess himself of the whole province, and thus secure ingress to the very heart of the French dominions. He accordingly passed the Var on the 25th of July, and at the head of his troops marched to Saint Laurent, the first town on the French frontier, where he planted his standards, and took up his residence for a short time, in order to await the arrival of the fleet under Andrea Doria, which was freighted with ample supplies for the invading army.

After his temporary halt at Saint Laurent, the emperor pursued his march to Provence, and advanced without encountering the slightest opposition until he reached the village of Tourbes, situated between Brignolles and St. Maximin, where he surprised a small force under M. de Montejan,[1] and Boisy, the son of the late admiral

[1] The Maréchal de Montejan was an officer of great courage, but vain and impetuous; and who was, in consequence, frequently

Bonnivet, who being unprepared for his immediate approach, and unable to contend against an enemy so formidable, were, after a bold but ineffectual struggle, during which the whole of their little band amounting to no more than five hundred men were cut to pieces, themselves made prisoners by the imperialists. This mischance was rendered the more mortifying from the fact, that these two imprudent young nobles, wearied of inaction, had obtained the reluctant consent of Montmorenci to indulge that taste for adventure so prevalent at the time, and so destructive of good discipline, and to sally forth in search of adventures; their object being to harass the skirmishing parties of the enemy, and, if possible, to gain the first laurels won during the campaign; and thus, through their own idle folly, they forfeited all future hope of assisting in the war.

The intelligence of their capture was a source of great annoyance to the king, who immediately foresaw that his vain-glorious adversary would profit by the circumstance to assert that he had beaten the French on their first encounter; but the event even exceeded his previsions, as Charles, anxious to maintain the *prestige* which had attached to him since his recent triumphs, caused it to

compared to M. de Lautrec. Having occasion, while acting as the king's lieutenant in Piedmont, to carry on a negotiation with the Marquis del Guasto, he pushed his arrogance so far as to propose that they should treat through the medium of ambassadors, an arrangement which was carried into effect to the great indignation of Francis I, who reprimanded him severely for assuming the state and privilege of a crowned head; nor, although he availed himself of his courage and experience as a general, did he ever again restore him to favour.

be reported throughout Europe that he had slaughtered or driven back the whole van-guard of the French army.

This comparatively unimportant incident was, however, fated to be soon obliterated from the mind of Francis, by the deepest calamity which had yet befallen him. The dauphin, after an illness of only four days, had ceased to exist. This prince, then only in his nineteenth year, had already, by the urbanity of his disposition, his literary attainments, and his calm and lofty courage, greatly endeared himself to all by whom he was approached. The only defect which he had inherited from his royal father was an inordinate love of dissipation; and besides his accredited mistress, the beautiful Mademoiselle de Lestrange, he indulged in other intrigues less public. This error was, however, counterbalanced by so many amiable qualities that it did not avail to weaken his popularity; and even Francis himself had begun to express his satisfaction that the Spaniard had at length been converted into a Frenchman. The dauphin had recently joined the army at Lyons, where he had been welcomed with enthusiasm; and the rejoicings consequent on his arrival were not yet over when he was attacked by the illness which terminated his existence.

His death was at first attributed to his imprudence in having, when heated at tennis, drank a copious draught of water; but he had no sooner expired than symptoms of poison became apparent which awoke the most sinister suspicions. He was, moreover, in the constant habit of drinking water almost to excess, under circumstances which would have rendered such an indulgence fatal to most constitutions; and this propensity was so well

known, that Donna Anna Beatrix de Pacheco, one of the maids of honour to Queen Eleonora, had presented to him an earthern vase, of a peculiar clay which induced an effervescence in the water without divesting it of its coolness, and which she had brought with her from Portugal.

The unhappy dauphin had, as we have mentioned above, been engaged at tennis; and the weather being sultry, he suffered so severely from the heat, that the moment the game was concluded he desired one of his pages to bring him a draught of water. The youth hastened to obey his commands; and as there chanced to be a well in the meadow which had been selected for the sport, he at once lowered the bucket, placing the vase from which the prince constantly drank upon the margin of the well, while he drew up the water. The weight causing him to be somewhat tardy in this operation, it was soon remembered that the Count Sebastian de Montecuculli, a nobleman of Ferrara, who had been appointed sewer in the household of the dauphin, had approached the spot as if with the intention of hastening his movements, but without interfering to assist him; and as no other individual was near the spring at the time, the fatal event which afterwards took place was attributed to his agency by all who were aware of this circumstance.

Having drawn the water, the page without waiting to rinse the vase plunged it into the bucket, and carried it to the prince, who in accordance with his usual habit emptied it at a draught. In a few seconds he complained of giddiness and intense pain; frightful convulsions supervened; nor could all the science of his

physicians afford him the slightest relief. It had been previously arranged that he should leave Lyons early on the following morning for Tournon, in order to join the king who had halted in that city on his way to Valence; nor could the entreaties of his friends dissuade him from persisting in his purpose. The only concession which they could obtain was that he would abandon the idea of pursuing his journey on horseback, and proceed by water; but this exertion, mitigated as it was, probably hastened his death, for he had scarcely reached the presence of his father, when he sank exhausted into the arms of his attendants, and in a few hours expired.

During the first paroxysm of his anguish none dared to inform the king of the peculiar symptoms exhibited by the disorder of the prince; but ere long the existence of arsenic, which was discovered in his body, rendered all further prospect of concealment hopeless; still, even when the fact was ascertained beyond all doubt, each of the attendants shrank from revealing the fatal truth. It was soon evident, however, that Francis had himself become suspicious that his son was the victim of an assassin; and the hesitation of the court physicians was terminated by his vehement questionings; for as during their passage up the Rhône, they had strictly watched every phase of the disease, and conferred together upon its nature, they deemed it expedient at length to request the Cardinal de Lorraine to communicate to the king their solemn conviction that the dauphin had died by poison.

At this confirmation of his own misgivings the anguish of the parent yielded to the indignation of the sovereign; and averting his face from the death-bed, Francis sternly

commanded all who were present, as they valued their heads, to point out to him the suspected author of the crime. Thus adjured, more than one of the dauphin's attendants were prepared to accuse Montecuculli; and the king had no sooner heard the grounds upon which the accusation was based than he made instant preparations for his return to Lyons.

Montecuculli was immediately arrested; and, under the agony of the question, the wretched man admitted his guilt; but whether from compunction, or in order to escape the torments to which he was subjected, it would be now impossible to decide. Thus much is certain, however; that he not only confessed to the murder of the prince, and declared that while the page was drawing up the water, he had flung arsenic into the vase, but even added that it was his intention to destroy the king himself and his two remaining sons by the same means.

When questioned as to his motive for committing such deadly crimes, he replied that he had been instigated to them by Antonio da Leyva and Ferdinand de Gonzaga;[1]

[1] Ferdinand de Gonzaga was the representative of a noble family of Parma, whose ancestor, Louis I, became, on the death of Passerino Buonacolsi (in the 14th century), Count of Mantua; Jean-François, the great-grandson of Louis, was created Marquis of Mantua in 1503; and finally the marquisate was erected into a duchy for Ferdinand in 1530. This prince commanded the Spanish troops at the siege of Florence; was Colonel-General of the light-horse under the Duke de Bourbon; became Viceroy of Sicily; accompanied the emperor on his invasion of France, as his lieutenant-general; and was finally appointed prime-minister to the son of his sovereign in Flanders, whom he served as faithfully as he had previously served his father. He died full of years and honours, with the proud boast of having gained many battles, and never lost a fortress.

asserting, moreover, that they had, like himself, acted under superior authority. Although the miserable culprit (if such indeed he were) never once directly accused the emperor by name, as the authority to which he alluded, he nevertheless left no doubt of his meaning, by entering into details which tended to implicate him in the crime. Among other circumstances, he stated that on one occasion when he had an audience of Charles V, that monarch had expressed considerable curiosity as to the diet of the French king, and his habits at table; an assertion which acquired additional importance from the fact that, only a short time previous to the death of the dauphin, Don Lopez de Soria, the imperial ambassador at Venice, had inquired who would become king of France in the event of the demise of the reigning sovereign and his sons.

Francis convened a council, before whom the confession of the culprit was read, and by whom his condemnation was instantly pronounced. He was sentenced to be first scourged, and then torn to pieces by horses.

Thus far, even barbarous as such a sentence undoubtedly was after the fearful tortures which the wretched culprit had already undergone, some excuse may be found for the king in the fact that he had not only been deprived of his first-born son by the most cruel means, but that his own life, and those of the two younger princes, had likewise been menaced—and this, moreover, by an agent of his most hated enemy; but surely nothing can extenuate the fact, that, not content with a description of the dying agonies of the victim of his vengeance, he resolved to become a spectator of the

hideous scene, and even commanded the attendance of the princes of the blood, the prelates, the foreign ambassadors, and all the men of rank then resident in Lyons. Nay more, if the evidence of Rœderer is to be credited, the court ladies themselves were not exempted from this revolting spectacle; nor was the vengeance of the king appeased until he had seen the mangled remains of the culprit torn into fragments by the infuriated populace.

At the close of the execution, Francis addressed circulars to the Protestant princes, informing them of all the details of the murder, and the fate of the murderer; and in these letters he openly accused the two imperialist generals of having instigated Montecuculli to the commission of the crime for which he had suffered. Charles V. resented, with the deepest indignation, an accusation which he could not but feel was directed against himself; and declared that he would rather have forfeited his empire than have had his name implicated in so heinous and revolting a crime; while Gonzaga and Da Leyva, with still more vehemence, protested that were Montecuculli still alive, they would prove their innocence by meeting him in arms, as they were now willing and anxious to do all those who should dare to affix so foul a stain upon their honour. Nor were they satisfied with mere self-exculpation; for, after demanding to know what benefit could have accrued either to their imperial master or themselves by the extirpation of the royal family of France, they retorted by throwing the guilt of the assassination upon Catherine de' Medici, who, by the death of the elder prince, became dauphiness, and stood upon the very step of the throne.

In ordinary cases such an accusation would have been as incredible as it was monstrous; but her early education, her known subtlety, and her undisguised ambition, rendered the niece of the pontiff, young as she was, so obnoxious to suspicion, that there were not wanting many, even in France, who believed her to be guilty.

Throughout the whole commencement of its march, the imperial army had been enabled to subsist upon the hoards made by the inhabitants of the several villages devastated by order of the French marshal, in order to arrest its progress by famine; the unhappy peasantry having hidden away their stores of grain and wine in the caves and forests, in the vain hope of securing them until the contending armies should have vacated their immediate neighbourhood; but these secret depositories, which had escaped the hurried researches of the French troops, owing to their eagerness to lay all waste before the advent of the enemy, did not succeed in eluding the more anxious eyes of the imperialists; who, having once discovered that the agrarian wealth of the province had been rather displaced than destroyed, instituted a perpetual survey, which, as we have stated, rendered them independent of the precautions of Montmorenci.

Doria had, moreover, taken possession of the port of Toulon; and had even announced to the emperor the practicability of navigating the Rhône with his gallies, and of assuring to the invading army all the supplies of which it might stand in need. In this endeavour he, however, found himself frustrated; and as the French troops persisted in remaining within their entrenchments, and the *cachettes* of the peasantry became exhausted,

Charles no sooner found himself in the plain, surrounded by dismantled cities, abandoned villages, and a devastated country, with the enemy entrenched at Avignon, and no chance of supplies save from Toulon, (which he was aware must be cut off before they could reach him,) than he resolved to avert the famine which stared him in the face by compelling an engagement.

He consequently encamped in the middle of August before Aix, where the increasing necessities of his troops induced him to enter the city, which he did, asserting that as the suzerain of Arles and Provence, he took possession of the capital by that right. He, however, found only a desert where he had looked to possess himself of a flourishing and wealthy population. Not only the archbishop and his clergy had abandoned the place, but also the judicial officers and the principal inhabitants; and although by virtue of the claim he had advanced he summoned them to return, as they made no response to his citation, he delivered over the town to pillage; and before its final abandonment on the 13th of September, issued an order for the destruction by fire of the Palace of Justice, at the request of the Duke of Savoy, who accompanied his army, and who was anxious to revenge the excesses of which the French troops had been guilty in Piedmont.

Baffled in his hopes of establishing his permanent headquarters at Aix, and of securing by such means the revictualling of his army, Charles discovered that he had no alternative save to possess himself of Arles or Marseilles. The camp of Montmorenci was too well defended to encourage an attack; and although the position of Arles

was favourable to his enterprise, should the siege prove tardy he was aware that the famine which had already commenced in his ranks must inevitably militate against his success, while, even should he make himself master of the city, he might find it as utterly devastated as Aix; whereas in the event of his taking Marseilles, the fleet of Andrea Doria could in a few hours arrive to his relief.

Henry, Duke d'Orleans, now Dauphin of France, had meanwhile joined the French army at Valence, and was no sooner apprised that the emperor had caused his light-horsemen to reconnoitre the camp at Avignon, than he earnestly entreated the king to allow him to join the Maréchal de Montmorenci, and to share in the honours of the engagement which appeared inevitable. But Francis, who had been so lately bereft of one son, trembled at the prospect of losing a second; and for a considerable time he firmly refused to allow the prince to separate himself from his own person. His importunities were, however, so vehement and so unceasing, that the king at length yielded, only enjoining him with great earnestness to obey under all circumstances the dictates of Montmorenci; who would, as he declared, while he guarded the honour of the dauphin as jealously as his own, be even more careful of his safety. Moreover, with a prudence which, in so haughty and despotic a monarch as Francis I, sufficiently revealed his anxiety, he bade the enthusiastic young prince remember that he held no official rank in the army which he was about to join; but that he would be a mere volunteer, who could assume no authority whatever, and who must be contented to obey, in order that he might hereafter be competent to command.

Satisfied with his success, the dauphin promised all

that his royal father required; and attended by several of his personal friends, he at once took leave of the king, and proceeded to the camp, where he was received with the same enthusiasm which had only a few weeks previously greeted the appearance of his murdered brother.

As we have shown, however, the emperor abandoned all idea of attacking Montmorenci; and the total pillage of a supply which had been landed at Toulon by Doria, and which became the prey of the impoverished peasantry, convinced him that he must at once compel an engagement, or abandon his hitherto abortive enterprise.

He first, therefore, proceeded to Marseilles; but after two or three hostile demonstrations, he discovered that all attempts to take the city would prove utterly vain. In addition to a garrison of seven thousand men, there were thirteen gallies in the port; while his own troops, famished for want of proper and wholesome nourishment, threw themselves eagerly upon the grapes, and even the immature fruits by which they were surrounded, and soon added to the horrors of famine the sufferings of dysentery. Within one month a third of his army perished, and among the rest his brave and faithful general Antonio da Leyva; while the forces of the French king were augmented by a reinforcement of twenty thousand Swiss and six thousand Germans.

He was next compelled to abandon the siege of Arles; for although its position, in the midst of heights by which it was commanded, appeared at the first glance to afford great facilities to a besieging army, the emperor soon ascertained that it was not only strongly and efficiently fortified, but that it contained within its walls some of the first chivalry of France.

Nothing was consequently left for Charles save an open battle or a precipitate retreat; while as no one for a moment suspected that he would adopt the latter alternative, the enthusiasm in all ranks of the French army was excited to the highest pitch; and the king himself, who had hitherto remained at Valence, in compliance with the advice and entreaties of his generals, summoned a council, at which he expressed his determination to join the main body at Avignon, in order to be present at the forthcoming engagement.

In vain did Montmorenci, so soon as he was apprised of this resolution, entreat Francis not to expose his person unnecessarily; and implore him not to incur the risk of involving the kingdom in inevitable confusion in the event of his death or capture, while by remaining at Valence the result of a victory must be equally honourable to him, without involving the same contingencies; in vain did he represent that the present opportunity was unusually favourable for the first essay in arms of the dauphin; and express his conviction that the young prince, with the assistance of his own experience and that of the principal generals, would win honour to himself and to the French name, by convincing the emperor that the subjects of his majesty were invincible upon their own soil; the resolution of the king remained unshaken.

Equally unavailing were the assurances of the maréchal that the emperor was no longer in a position to maintain his ground; and that, decimated as his camp had become by disease and famine, he must of necessity retreat should their own troops refuse to give him immediate battle. The hour of forbearance was past, and Francis refused to defer to his arguments. Du Bellay added his entreaties

to those of Montmorenci, but with no better success. Still, however, the maréchal ventured to insist; and he was prompted to this pertinacity by the fact that a superstitious feeling had grown up in the French army that the presence of the king upon any field of battle would inevitably entail defeat; an unfortunate and mortifying belief which the monarch was naturally anxious to eradicate.

"Enough, my lords, enough;" exclaimed Francis impatiently; "On the faith of a gentleman! it shall never be said that while my arch-enemy is at the head of his armies, sword in hand, I am content to remain cooped up within the walls of Valence, as though I feared to beard him on my own territories. No, Sirs; harangue as you may, I will go forth to meet him; and perchance the duel of which he hath made such loud bruits throughout all Christendom, may chance to be foughten when he least expects it. I am well aware that many among you who are endeavouring to dissuade me from what I hold to be a right royal duty, are infected by a frivolous superstition, to which, as a Christian king, I cannot yield my faith. My confidence is in GOD: he alone rules the destinies alike of individuals and of armies."

On the following morning Francis, after having attended the early mass, accordingly embarked upon the Rhône, and proceeded to Avignon, having left a strong garrison for the protection of Valence; and despite the disparaging apprehensions of his army, he was received with joyous acclamations, and entered the camp with a brilliant staff, escorted by the whole of the gendarmerie, who had hastened to meet him.

At this period Doria had succeeded in landing and

forwarding supplies to the emperor, which enabled him to silence the murmurs of his troops, and to inspire them in some degree with renovated hope; but the evil had taken too deep a root; and while the French were hourly expecting the engagement for which they had long panted, Martin du Bellay Langei, who had been sent to reconnoitre the movements of the enemy, returned with the astounding intelligence that the imperialists were in full retreat; and that, in order to facilitate their march, they had abandoned all their sick and wounded.

The accuracy of this statement was soon proved; for, on the entrance of Francis and his troops into the deserted camp, a most frightful spectacle presented itself. Nevertheless, Montmorenci refused to pursue the retreating enemy; he dreaded lest the hunted lion should turn to bay, and that in the extremity of his despair he should sacrifice himself rather than not wreak his fury upon his enemy. Peronne was moreover menaced, and he was compelled to detach a strong force to its assistance. He consequently contented himself, so soon as he had ascertained that the emperor was on his march towards Flanders, by despatching the light-horse under the command of the Count de Tende,[1] Du Bellay Langei,

[1] The Count de Tende was a gallant soldier, who was Colonel of the Swiss troops in Naples; and subsequently Governor of Provence, where he rendered good service to the king, until he became suspected of Lutheranism, which faith his wife openly professed. The Provençals then rebelled against his authority, and caused him to be replaced by his son, the Count de Sommerive; declaring that Provence was destroyed by three equal plagues; the winds, the Durance, and the Countess de Tende; the first overthrowing everything, the second flooding everything, and the third perverting everything.

and Bonnivet, to harass his rear-guard, by which means a great slaughter of the imperialists took place, as the flank squadrons cut off all the foraging parties that were detached from the main body, sparing neither men nor horses; until the road between Aix and Frejus was strewn with arms and baggage, the wounded and the dead.

This was not the only impediment, however, which the emperor experienced to his retreat; for, as his troops were defiling beneath a tower of the village of Muy which he had supposed to be abandoned, some peasants who had taken refuge there, upon seeing the splendid train of the Spanish leader Garcilasso de la Vega,[1] the first poet of his day and nation, whom, from the magnificence of his appearance, they mistook for Charles himself, simultaneously fired a volley, by which they mortally wounded De la Vega, and killed several of his immediate suite. Enraged by this irreparable loss, the emperor, careless of the danger to which he might be exposed by such a delay, instantly halted his army, stormed the tower which was unable to withstand so formidable an attack, and having secured the miserable men within, hung them from the portal of the tower, and then pursued his march, leaving this ghastly memorial of his passage as his last legacy of vengeance.

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, otherwise Garcias Lasso, the celebrated Spanish poet, was born at Toledo in 1503. He served in the army of Charles V, as a volunteer, in Germany, Italy, and France, and died of the wound received in the retreat of Frejus, at Nice, in 1536. He was the head of a new school of poetry; and enriched his native language by the introduction of the most elegant of the foreign idioms. He was principally famous, however, for his odes, his eclogues (among which the most popular were *Nemoroso* and *Salicio*), his elegies, his sonnets, and his ballads.

Mortified and disappointed, with a diminished and discontented army, and an exhausted exchequer, Charles despatched his troops, under the command of the Marquis del Guasto, into the Milanese, where he quartered them in the cities of the Duke of Savoy; (who thus, invaded alike by his friends and his enemies, found himself dispossessed of all his territories, save the city and fortress of Nice, into which he had retired;) and this arrangement effected, he himself proceeded to Genoa, where his gallies were awaiting him, and where he remained for a fortnight before he embarked for Spain. His whole expedition was, however, fated to be unfortunate; for he was no sooner in mid-sea than he was overtaken by so terrific a storm, that not only were six of his gallies sunk, but also two larger vessels, one of which was freighted with his plate, and the other with his stud.

Never was failure more complete or more disastrous. The loud boastings with which Charles had undertaken his campaign were yet ringing in the ears of all Europe; for only two months had elapsed from the period of his embarkation for France, and of his retreat thence as a fugitive, who had not even met the enemy whom he went forth to defeat. To Francis his triumph was bloodless, while to the emperor his failure was a blot which could never be effaced. The *prestige* of his military glory was gone; the conqueror of Solyman and Barbarossa was shorn of his laurels; and his keenest pang arose from the consciousness that he had been compelled to fly before the very troops whom he had affected to despise.

CHAPTER XIII.

[1536-38.]

CONSTERNATION OF THE ITALIAN PRINCES—THE SIEGE OF TURIN IS RAISED—THE IMPERIAL TROOPS ENTER PICARDY—HEROISM OF THE WOMEN OF ST. REGNIER—CAPITULATION OF GUISE—THE IMPERIALISTS BESIEGE PERONNE—THEY ARE REPULSED BY FLEURANGES—DEATH OF FLEURANGES—ALARM IN PARIS—ANNEBAUT AND BURIE DEFEND TURIN—BURIE IS MADE CAPTIVE AT CASAL—FRANCIS STRENGTHENS THE FRONTIERS OF PROVENCE—JAMES V. OF SCOTLAND MEETS THE KING AT LYONS—JAMES V. IS MARRIED TO THE PRINCESS MARGUERITE—JEALOUSY OF HENRY VIII.—KNIGHT ERRANTRY OF JAMES V.—DEATH OF THE PRINCESS MARGUERITE—JAMES DEMANDS THE HAND OF MARIE DE GUISE—FEUD BETWEEN THE ROYAL FAVOURITES—VIRULENCE OF THE DUCHESS D'ETAMPES—DISUNION IN THE ROYAL FAMILY—INFATUATION OF FRANCIS I.—APPREHENSIONS OF MADAME D'ETAMPES—HER PASSION FOR MONTMORENCI—FRANCIS LAYS CLAIM TO FLANDERS, ARTOIS, AND CHARLEROIS—CONVOCATION OF THE PARLIAMENT—CHARLES V. IS CITED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE FRENCH TRIBUNALS—THE EMPEROR DISREGARDS THE SUMMONS—THE FRENCH ENTER ARTOIS—THEY TAKE HESDIN—THE IMPERIALISTS INVEST ST. POL—THE CITY IS TAKEN BY DE BUREN—DE BUREN MARCHES UPON TEROUENNE—ANNEBAUT RELIEVES THE CITY—A FATAL SKIRMISH—A TRUCE IS EFFECTED BETWEEN FRANCE, PICARDY, AND THE LOW COUNTRIES—FRANCIS OPENLY AVOWS HIS ALLIANCE WITH THE SULTAN—SOLYMAN ENTERS ALBANIA—DEL GUASTO SUCCESSFULLY PURSUES THE WAR IN PIEDMONT—M. D'HUMIERES IS APPOINTED TO THE CHIEF COMMAND OF THE FRENCH ARMY IN ITALY—THE MARQUIS DE SALUZZO ASSISTS DEL GUASTO IN THE SIEGE OF CARMAGNOLE—HE IS KILLED BY A MUSKET BALL—CARMAGNOLE SURRENDERS—CRUELTY OF THE IMPERIALIST GENERAL—THE DAUPHIN AND MONTMORENCI MARCH TO LYONS, AND ARE FOLLOWED BY THE KING—DEL GUASTO FORTIFIES THE PAS-DE-SUZE, WHICH IS FORCED BY THE FRENCH—THE IMPERIALISTS RAISE THE SIEGE OF PIGNEROL, AND ENCAMP AT MONCALIER—THE DAUPHIN COMPELS THEM TO RETREAT, AND TAKES THE CITY—FRANCIS RESOLVES TO TAKE THE FIELD IN PERSON—THE TRUCE IS EXTENDED TO PIEDMONT—THE DUKE OF SAVOY RETIRES TO NICÉ—CHARLES V. ENDEAVOURS TO EFFECT AN EUROPEAN PEACE, AND OFFERS THE HAND OF HIS NIECE TO THE DUKE D'ORLEANS—FRANCIS OBJECTS TO THE PROPOSED CONDITIONS—MONTMORENCI IS CREATED CONNÉTABLE—DEATH OF THE CHANCELLOR DU BOURG.

CHAPTER XIII.

[1536-38.]

THE sensation created throughout Italy by the proposed invasion of France had meanwhile been intense. The petty princes of that country, aware that should the emperor be successful, the preservation of their independence could only be secured by an universal coalition, made instant preparations for a league; and not daring to declare their purpose openly, entered into secret negotiations to that effect with the more powerful states. The French king, anxious to second their efforts, had appointed as their general the Count Guy de Rangon, under whose command they placed a force of ten thousand men, with which they attempted to possess themselves of Genoa, but a reinforcement of imperialists which had just reached that city rendered their attack abortive. They next marched upon Ast, when the Spaniards raised the siege of Turin, and allowed them to take Carignano, Raconis, Carmagnoles, and, with slight exceptions, the whole marquisate of Saluzzo.

During the invasion of Provence by the emperor, the Count de Nassau, and Adrian de Croy, Count de Rœux,

had entered Picardy at the head of twenty thousand foot and seven thousand horse; and after laying waste the open country and pillaging all the villages upon their route, had made themselves masters of Bray-sur-Somme, and several other places of less importance. Encouraged by this success, they next endeavoured to reduce St. Rignier; but the town being well garrisoned, and the walls furnished with artillery, they received a check for which, from the apparent insignificance of the place, they were totally unprepared. They had, moreover, in this attempt, to combat not only the troops but also the citizens, and even the women, who in many instances ascended the ramparts, and assisted in repelling the besiegers by pouring hot water and boiling tar upon their heads; while others, with a courage which should have immortalized their memory as heroines, however incompatible it might be with their nature as women, assumed the garb of their husbands, and fought bravely with sword and spear, until they succeeded in wresting two standards from the enemy.

Thence the imperialists had directed their march towards the city of Guise; where the Duke de Vendôme, who despaired of making an effectual resistance, had issued orders to the garrison to shut themselves up in the citadel; they had not time, however, to effect this arrangement before the enemy was upon them, and they were accordingly compelled to capitulate. Nassau then proceeded to attack Peronne, which was even less capable than Guise of sustaining an assault; and so great was the alarm of the inhabitants when they became apprised of the approach of the imperialist army, that they resolved

to save themselves by flight; a determination which was only abandoned when they were recalled to a more prudent line of conduct by the courageous example of a wealthy landholder in the neighbourhood, M. d'Estourmel, who instead of flying from the city, caused all his grain and other edibles to be transported within the walls, and himself took up his abode there with his family. The example so boldly given was immediately followed; and the unexpected appearance of Fleuranges, at the head of a small force, restored them in some degree to confidence. Their means of defence were, however, so scanty, and the operations of the enemy so vigorous, that hope soon began to fail; their ammunition became exhausted, their fortifications were dilapidated, and their provisions were inadequate for the supply of the inhabitants.

The emperor's artillery had told fearfully within the first four-and-twenty hours, and several large breaches were made in the walls. Nassau, moreover, opened a mine under the old tower of Peronne, (an historical pile famous as the prison of Charles the Simple and Louis XI,) which overthrew it to half its height, and buried in its ruins the Count de Dammartin who shared the command of Fleuranges. Notwithstanding this misfortune, however, the gallant little band still held out; and just as they were about to become the prey of the enemy, the Duke de Guise, who had been apprised by Fleuranges of the extremity to which they were reduced, no longer possessing either food or powder, succeeded in supplying them with both; as well as in reinforcing them by four hundred crossbow men, whom he introduced into the town across the marshes, which being considered

impassable, were less carefully guarded than the other avenues to the city. Although this fact was ascertained too late by the imperialists, they nevertheless continued the siege, and made two or three more assaults upon the outworks; but they were soon compelled to abandon the enterprise, leaving their ladders and a number of their bravest troops in the ditches. On the 10th of September, finding all their efforts to take the place unavailing, while the loss of life became daily greater, they raised the siege; and thus abandoned their enterprise the very day before that on which the emperor had commenced his own retreat from Provence.

The enemy had no sooner withdrawn his forces than Fleuranges hastened to meet the king, who was on his march homeward, and to report the result of his courageous defence. He was not long destined, however, to enjoy the triumph which he had so nobly earned, for only a short time subsequently he received intelligence of the death of his equally brave father at Sedan; and while on his way to pay the last tribute of respect to his remains, he fell a victim to a malignant fever, and France was thus deprived of one of her best and noblest soldiers.

When it became known in Paris that Peronne was in a state of siege, the alarm was universal; little hope being entertained that the enemy would be arrested in their march towards the capital by a city so ill prepared against aggression; and it was entirely owing to the zealous and judicious exertions of the Cardinal du Bellay, the metropolitan bishop, that confidence was ultimately restored. The king on his departure for the

south had, in addition to his ecclesiastical rank, appointed Du Bellay lieutenant-general of the capital; and he had lost no time in conveying all the wheat and wine which could be obtained within a round of six leagues into the storehouses of the city; both of which proved to be so abundant in quantity as to suffice not only for the supply of the whole population during the space of an entire year, but also for that of a garrison of thirty thousand men. The energy of the Parisians on this occasion equalled his own; for they no sooner became convinced of his power as well as of his will to protect them, than they volunteered to give him a brigade of artillery and ten thousand troops, to be maintained at their own cost so long as the enemy should occupy the frontier. The gallantry of Fleuranges and his little garrison soon relieved them, however, from their apprehensions, and the fortifications which they were hastily constructing were accordingly abandoned.

Meanwhile the Admiral d'Annebaut,[1] and M. de Buric,[2]

[1] M. d'Annebaut was a celebrated general, who made his first campaign under the Maréchal de Montmorenci at Mezières, where he acquired a reputation which he never subsequently forfeited. He was Colonel of the Light-Horse under the Count de Saint-Pol in Italy, and narrowly escaped sharing his captivity, when that prince was made prisoner by Antonio da Leyva at Milan. He was afterwards appointed Governor of Turin; and was rewarded for his bravery and judgment while holding that dignity, by the vacant *bâton* of the Maréchal de Montejan.

[2] M. de Burie commenced his career as a simple bowman, but soon distinguished himself so much as to attain to high military rank. He was a man of good family, but so poor that the first horse which he was compelled to provide while serving under the Grand-Master of Savoy, was presented to him by the Count de Bordeille, who was aware that he was unable to purchase one. His personal

who commanded at Turin, not only defended that place with the greatest zeal, but harassed the enemy by frequent and daring sallies beyond the walls, continually making prisoners, and securing booty. On one of these occasions, however, Burie, whom his previous successes had rendered less cautious than heretofore, was surrounded by the troops of the Marquis del Guasto in Casal, which town he had just taken, and was made prisoner after a vigorous resistance, together with the remnant of his men who survived. M. d'Humieres was forthwith despatched to replace him with a reinforcement of ten thousand lansquenets; and the French king, having thus provided for the safety of Turin, proceeded to Marseilles, where he confirmed the municipal privileges both of that city and of Aix, although he refused to remit the taxes until the devastations to which they had been subjected could be repaired; declaring that however deeply he felt the hardships to which they had been subjected, the outlay necessary for the defence of the kingdom at that period would not permit him to accede to their request. He then strengthened all the frontier fortresses of Provence and Languedoc; and having thus secured the safety of his

prowess, however, soon enabled him to attain the grade of a colonel of infantry, and he was so accomplished an engineer, that he was the rival in that science of Pietro da Navarro, previously considered the first engineer of the age. He next obtained the government of Guyenne, where he acquitted himself with so much honour that the king conferred upon him the order of St. Michael. During the intestine commotions which succeeded he was suspected of Lutheranism, from the reluctance which he evinced to put to death such of the Reformists as fell into his hands. He died poor, never having enriched himself by the spoils of the provinces over which he had been called to rule, as was too much the fashion of that day.

southern territories, and the season being adverse to all further operations, he once more set forth for the capital.

At Lyons he was met by James V. of Scotland, who, eager to prove his sense of the alliance which had so long existed between his own ancestors and the French sovereigns, and doubtlessly also anxious to secure the support of Francis against England, had voluntarily embarked with a force of sixteen thousand men to assist him in his campaign. Nor had the Scottish king persisted in his purpose without considerable difficulty, as the fleet which conveyed his little army was three times driven back by adverse winds; but so soon as he was enabled to land at Dieppe with a portion of his troops, he had hastened to make his way to the theatre of war; when, as we have already stated, he encountered the king on his return.

Francis was not slow to express his gratitude for so signal an act of friendship and goodwill; and upon his expressing his desire to requite it, James replied by reminding him that he had already led him to hope for the hand of Madame Marguerite, his eldest daughter, and warmly urging him now to fulfil his promise. At such a moment, and under such circumstances, the French monarch did not hesitate, although James was already affianced to a daughter of the Duke de Vendôme; and accordingly the Scotch king accompanied the royal train to the capital as the future son-in-law of the sovereign.

On the 1st of January, 1537, the marriage was solemnized with great magnificence at the episcopal palace; and it sufficed to alienate the friendship and confidence

of Henry VIII, who looked with extreme jealousy upon this alliance. His own position was at the moment so embarrassing, however, that he contented himself by turning his back upon M. de la Pommeraye,[1] the ambassador who had been sent by Francis to announce it to him; the unfortunate Anne Boleyn having just fallen a victim to his ruthless caprice, while he had already become the husband of Jane Seymour. In obedience to his passions he had alternately persecuted both the Protestants and the Romanists, and was, consequently, distrusted by both parties; the alliance of James V. with a French princess destroyed, as he was well aware, the balance of the two kingdoms, and rendered his position more onerous than before; nor could he overcome his mortification when he remembered that the hand of his own daughter Mary, whom he had recently bastardized, had been twice offered to the Scotch king; once by the emperor, who had pledged himself that, although thus legally disinherited by her father, she should nevertheless succeed to the throne of England; and on another occasion by himself, as a pledge of alliance between the two countries; on the sole condition that James should, like himself, become the avowed protector of the Reformed religion.

The Scottish king, whose Romanist principles were averse to this concession, but who was nevertheless desirous to form an alliance which would enable him to counteract the devices of the enemies by whom he was beset in his own nation, went incognito, in the first instance, as some historians assert, to Vendôme, in order to obtain a sight of his affianced bride; and being dis-

[1] M. de la Pommeraye was steward of the king's household.

satisfied upon finding that she was less attractive than he had been led to suppose, departed as secretly as he had gone, and at once resolved to demand the hand of the Princess Marguerite, then in her seventeenth year.

The fair and delicate character of her beauty at once fascinated James; and the languor which incipient consumption had already cast over her person, added, in his romantic eyes, to the charms of her appearance. It would seem, moreover, according to Buchanan, that the attraction was mutual, and that Marguerite bestowed not only her hand, but also her heart, upon her enamoured suitor; a most uncommon case in royal marriages.

Whether James in reality played the knight-errant as thus represented, must for ever remain questionable; thus much, however, is certain, that, after passing three or four months of constant festivity at the French court, he finally departed with his bride for Scotland, where they landed on the 28th of May; and that on the 7th of the July ensuing, the young queen, unable to withstand the fluctuations of a climate to which she was unaccustomed, fell a victim to the insidious disease under which she had long laboured. Her amiability had already, however, endeared her alike to the court and to the people, who mourned her loss as that of one who would not easily be replaced; although her excessive attachment to her aunt, the Queen of Navarre, had alarmed the priesthood, who dreaded her influence over the mind of the king, and who consequently urged James to take another wife at the termination of his mourning.

To the surprise of all who had witnessed his excessive affection for his young bride, the widowed monarch at

once consented to comply with their advice; and, at the expiration of that period, despatched ambassadors to France to solicit the hand of Marie de Guise, the widow of the Duke de Longueville, with whom he had made acquaintance at the French court.

It is probable that Francis, the father of the deceased queen, regarded the demand as somewhat premature; for although from considerations of policy it was conceded, Marie de Guise did not reach Scotland until the 14th of June in the ensuing year, when her nuptials with the Scottish king were immediately solemnized.

During the festivities consequent upon the marriage of the Princess Marguerite, the court of France was, to all appearance, entirely occupied by gaiety and splendour; but such was far from being in reality the case. The death of the elder prince, and the consequent succession of Henry his brother to the rank of Dauphin of France, had effected so great a change in the position of the two royal favourites, that the schism to which we have already made allusion became every day more apparent and more alarming. The separate factions had, in fact, virtually declared themselves; and they were so nicely balanced, that none could decide upon the ultimate triumph of either. At the head of one of these parties were the Duchess d'Etampes, Charles, now Duke d'Orleans, and Brion de Chabot; at that of the other, Diana de Poitiers, the Dauphin, and the Connétable de Montmorenci; while Catherine de' Medici, with a dissimulation as profound as it was politic, remained resolutely neutral; affecting the greatest regard for both the ambitious rivals, and even honouring Madame de Brézé, who had for ever

alienated from her the affection of her husband, injured her interests, and wounded her vanity, with a display of confidence and attachment wholly incompatible with their relative position. Although perpetually urged by both parties to declare her real sentiments, the wily Italian resolutely refused to side with either. Like Louise de Savoie, she was content to "bide her time;" and for twenty long and weary years she so far controlled herself as never to remove the mask which she had assumed towards the mistress of her husband.

The rivalry of the favourites was productive, meanwhile, of the most disastrous results to the kingdom; and its first fruits were to promote disunion in the family of the king; who, influenced by the representations and prejudices of the unscrupulous Duchess d'Etampes, soon began to treat the dauphin with a marked coldness, which contrasted painfully with the favour and indulgence which he evinced towards the younger prince; and a feeling of jealousy and distrust consequently sprang up between the two brothers which threatened to overwhelm France with anarchy and confusion. The birth of a daughter had rendered Diana more than ever dear to the dauphin; and, secure of his affection, she ceased to conceal the hatred which she had long harboured against Madame d'Etampes, and to repay in kind every affront to which she was subjected by the arrogant favourite.

In the magnificence of her establishment the Grande Sénéchale was already enabled to vie with the duchess, and she did so with an ostentation as insolent as it was reckless; but meanwhile her rival, aware that the health of the king was rapidly failing, exerted all her energies to

undermine the interests of the dauphin, through whose disgrace alone she could hope to ruin the prospects of Diana,—prospects which were, moreover, based upon her own overthrow,—and at the same time to enrich herself.

How completely she succeeded in the latter attempt the public treasury bore only too ample testimony. Splendid residences in the capital, and estates and châteaux in the country, passed rapidly into her possession; and even while Francis was engaged in new intrigues, she had become so necessary to his home-happiness that all her wishes remained as before, a law to the infatuated monarch. So jealous, indeed, did he prove himself of securing her society by every possible method, that, on discovering the preference she evinced for a stately hôtel which he had presented to her in the Rue de l'Hirondelle, he caused a small palace to be built at the angle of that street where it is connected with the Rue Gît-le-Cœur, which, communicating with her residence, he fitted up in the most costly manner. The frescoed walls, the pictures, the groups of statuary, the tapestried hangings, and all the embellishments of the apartments, were made subservient to the display of a passion which was dishonourable alike to both parties; the gilded cornices were ornamented with carvings, in which a heart, whence flame was issuing, was placed between the words *alpha* and *omega;* while the salamander, the device of the king, surmounted the large mirrors, and held back the draperies that veiled the windows.

And amid all this magnificence, guilty and heart-sick, she saw the health of the king gradually declining; and was aware that on his demise Madame de Brézé

would dispossess her of all her ill-acquired influence. For Francis, as an individual, it was evident that she felt no affection; while even her gratitude for the benefits which he had so profusely showered upon her was extremely questionable. To the most inordinate personal vanity she had ever been so notoriously a victim, that she considered him as still her debtor; nor did the slavish adulations of the courtiers, who saw in her only the favourite of the monarch, tend to weaken her self-appreciation. Powerful by her attractions, her riches, and her position, she found herself perpetually surrounded by homage; and the terror with which she contemplated the probable loss of these advantages deprived her of all peace. Nor did she escape other and keener feelings of mortification and disappointment; the only noble of high rank at court who had remained totally insensible to her fascinations was Montmorenci, who, between his chivalric adoration of the queen, and a violent passion for Madame de Brézé, had coldly withstood all her blandishments, and at length so piqued her vanity, that even her callous heart had yielded itself, although unsought; while the constant terror which she felt lest her more ignoble intrigues might become known to the king, kept her in a perpetual state of unrest.

Fortunately, however, for the frail favourite, the recent successes of Francis, and his desire to increase their effect by still further humiliating the pride of the emperor, sufficed to distract his attention from her disgraceful irregularities. After having secured the safety of Picardy, he determined to reclaim the counties of Flanders, Artois, and Charlerois, which, although they formed

a portion of the patrimonial estates of Charles, had been held alike by himself and his ancestors as fiefs of the French crown. This proceeding, which was in point of fact utterly futile, was rather intended by Francis to mark his contempt for the power of the emperor, than to aggrandize his own; but having once resolved upon the measure, it was not long ere his counsellors furnished him with a sufficient pretext for its enforcement, which was supplied by the assertion, that, from his having declared war against France without any provocation, Charles had violated the treaty of Cambray, and thereby annulled the cessions made by France in that negotiation; among the rest, the homage and cognisance of the counties of Artois and Flanders, by which he was, as his predecessors had previously been, the vassal of the crown.

In order to issue an official edict to this effect, Francis assembled the parliament, and proceeded to hold a bed of justice, surrounded by the princes of the blood, the King of Navarre, the peers, and between forty and fifty bishops; and at which Jacques Cappel, the king's advocate, read upon his knees a long statement previously prepared by the chancellor, wherein the emperor was merely styled Charles of Austria. In this document, with a sophistry as shallow as it was high-sounding, he attempted to prove that the emperor was a feudatory of the French king for the three counties in question, while he had, nevertheless, frequently taken up arms against his suzerain; an act of rebellion which, as it set forth, justified the reclamation of these fiefs, and their consequent confiscation to the crown. No allusion was

made to the treaty of Madrid, by which Francis had relinquished his title to the sovereignty he now asserted, and no discussion was permitted by the chambers; but so soon as the speech was terminated the chancellor collected the votes of the assembly, commencing with those of the dauphin and the other princes of the blood, and concluding with those of the parliament themselves; after which it was decreed that heralds should be sent to the frontiers of the Low Countries to summon the emperor to appear in person, or by deputy, to answer within a given time to the charges brought against him.

To this citation Charles V, as a natural consequence, vouchsafed no attention; and the parliament accordingly decreed the forfeiture of the three counties to the French crown; an empty act of bombast which only tended to degrade the judicial authority of the country, without affecting the tenure of the emperor, who continued to hold the reclaimed counties as though no such edict had ever been promulgated. Exasperated by the silent contempt of his adversary, Francis resolved to enforce his self-constituted claim; and towards the end of March he entered Artois with a force of twenty-six thousand infantry and a few squadrons of cavalry, and took the city of Hesdin by siege; after which he attacked the castle, a post of considerable importance as a frontier-fortress. This success, however, was dearly bought, as it cost him the lives of Antoine de Mailli, and Charles de Beuil the young Count de Sancerre, as well as those of many other brave men. Saint-Pol, Saint-Venant, Lillers, and several other towns of less strength, fell

successively into his hands; after which he placed a portion of his troops in cantonment upon the frontier, establishing his head-quarters at Pernes; and then marched the remainder into Piedmont, where the enemy were collecting a large force.

The latter division was, however, soon recalled, intelligence having reached the French lines that d'Egmond, Count de Buren,[1] the lieutenant-general of the emperor, had already invested Saint-Pol. As this city was of the greatest importance to Francis, he had no sooner entered the gates than he issued stringent orders for its immediate and efficient defence, but before his commands could be obeyed, the imperialists appeared before the walls. The engineer to whom the king on his departure for Saint-Venant had entrusted the reparation of the fortifications, had assured him that they should be completed within the space of three weeks; but before the expiration of that time, and while they were still in an unfinished state, they were, as we have said, assaulted by the enemy. The garrison was, however, strong; and many able officers were assembled within the walls under the command of Jean d'Estouteville, Seigneur de Villebon,[2] who had been appointed governor of the city; and thus,

[1] Maximilian d'Egmond, Count de Buren, was a descendant of the Dukes de Gueldre, Knight of the Golden Fleece, and General of the armies of Charles V. At the head of 30,000 infantry and 8,000 horse he retook the city of Saint-Pol from the French, and subsequently burnt it. He died at Brussels, in 1548.

[2] Jean d'Estouteville, Seigneur de Villebon, was descended from an ancient and illustrious family of Normandy, and counted among his other distinguished ancestors the celebrated Guillaume d'Estouteville, Archbishop of Rouen, famous for his diplomatic services under Charles VII. and Louis XI. The family became extinct in 1566.

while the pioneers continued their labours under the very fire of the imperialists, the attack was met by the troops with such tenacious courage, that they were enabled to hold out until the 15th of the month, when Buren took the place by assault, and slaughtered the whole of the inhabitants, as well as the greater portion of the garrison. Many of the bravest of the French officers shared the fate of their followers; and Martin du Bellay was only saved by being dragged from under a heap of dead by a German officer whose prisoner he became, together with M. de Villebon. The two nobles were forthwith conveyed to Gravelines, where the ransom of the former was fixed at three thousand crowns, and that of the latter at ten thousand, which, having been immediately paid, they were permitted to return to France.

This intelligence reached the dauphin and Montmorenci as they were on their march to relieve the city; and although their assistance came too late to save Saint-Pol, they continued to advance rapidly in order to reinforce the other frontier towns in the event of their being attacked; while the Count de Buren, finding his position untenable from the near neighbourhood of so large an army as that which was approaching, set fire to the city and razed the citadel; he then abandoned his fruitless conquest, and marched upon Térouenne, where his appearance would have excited no alarm had not a scarcity of powder rendered the garrison unable to protect their ramparts.

The great importance of this place determined the dauphin and the Maréchal de Montmorenci, who were assembling their army at Amiens, to attempt its relief; and d'Annebaut was entrusted with the perilous duty

of introducing the necessary ammunition within the walls. He accordingly placed himself at the head of a corps of gendarmerie, a regiment of light horse, and four hundred harquebusiers, each of whom bore at his saddle-bow a bag of powder; and his arrangements were so skilfully carried out, that under cover of the darkness the whole supply reached the beleaguered garrison in safety; but just as he had commenced his retreat with the same caution as he had evinced on his approach, he was startled by the sound of musketry, and discovered that a party of the young nobles who were serving with the army as volunteers, had without his knowledge joined the expedition, and thus imprudently given the alarm to the enemy's camp.

He immediately sent an order that they should retire on the instant, and waited for some time to enable them to rejoin him; but as the morning was just breaking, and Buren had kept his cavalry on the alert throughout the night, that wary general was not only enabled to charge those who had lingered behind, but also to take possession of a bridge across which the whole of the French force must necessarily pass in their retreat. Annebaut thus found himself opposed to a strong body of cavalry, which he was enabled for a time to repulse; but the imperialists having scattered themselves on all sides, he was ultimately surrounded, his horse was shot under him, and he was taken prisoner together with Piennes,[1]

[1] The Seigneur de Piennes was the representative of a noble and ancient family, and was one of the favourites of Francis I. He was present at Fornoue, and at the Battle of the Spurs, and was ultimately appointed Governor of Picardy.

d'O,[1] Sansac,[2] the Marquis de Villars,[3] and several other men of high rank.

Nevertheless, the city had received the necessary supplies; and although by an act of the most reckless imprudence the French had sustained an irreparable loss, the temporary safety of the place was secured. But the dauphin, who had lost several of his personal friends in the skirmish, at once resolved with the sanction of Montmorenci, to compel Buren, who was still besieging Terouenne with a pertinacity which threatened its ultimate destruction, to a general engagement. On the very eve of his contemplated attack, however, a herald despatched by Mary, the Dowager-Queen of Hungary and governante of the Low Countries, reached his camp,

[1] The Count d'O, Seigneur de Gresner, was descended from an illustrious Norman family, which became extinct in 1734.

[2] Louis Revot, Baron de Sansac, was of a noble house of Angoumois; he was page to the Maréchal de Montmorenci, and commenced his career in arms under Bonnivet. After the battle of Pavia, where he was made prisoner, he succeeded in effecting his escape, and in returning to France; whence he was several times despatched by Louise de Savoie to Madrid, with confidential messages to her son during his captivity. He acquired great renown by his conduct at Mirandola, in 1554, where he compelled the enemy to raise the siege. He was the first equestrian of his time, and instructed Francis in the noble science of equitation. He subsequently became governor of the sons of Henry II; and died in 1570.

[3] The Marquis de Villars was the son of Réné, the Bastard of Savoy, and Grand-Master of France; and brother of the Count de Tende. He was a brave and experienced soldier; but was unfortunate enough to be made prisoner, not only at Terouenne, but subsequently also at the battle of St. Quentin, where he was, moreover, severely wounded. Having been appointed to the government of Guyenne, he established at Bordeaux a society for the suppression of the Protestants.

with the intelligence that the emperor had proposed a truce to which the French king had acceded, and that the negotiation was entrusted to herself. All hostilities were consequently to terminate on the frontier; and M. de Buren had already received orders to discontinue the siege of Terouenne. Commissioners were appointed on both sides, who met at the village of Bommy; and on the 30th of July a suspension of the war in Picardy and the Low Countries was concluded for the space of ten months.

Francis had at this period entered into an open alliance with Solyman, by which he had excited the indignation of all the Christian princes; and when, according to the conditions of the truce, he withdrew his army from the Low Countries while Buren raised the siege of Terouenne, it was suspected that he contemplated entering Italy, in accordance with the treaty that he had signed with the Turks, who were at the same time to make a descent upon Naples. The sultan had, in fact, already marched a hundred thousand men into Albania upon the faith of this treaty; and was daily awaiting there the appearance of his ally, when he ascertained that he was engaged in a war with Flanders, upon which he withdrew his own army, and abandoned the enterprise.

In Piedmont the affairs of France were progressing even less satisfactorily; the Italian officers having quarrelled among themselves, the lansquenets mutinied, and the French troops deserted in great numbers; while the Marquis del Guasto, profiting by the anarchy of the enemy, was strengthening the cause of the emperor by overrunning the marquisate of Saluzzo.

In this extremity Francis appointed M. d'Humières to the chief command of his Italian army, and directed Du Bellay-Langei, upon whose zeal and discretion he was aware that he could rely with safety, to effect a reconciliation between the contending parties. This, however, proved to be impossible, as the virulence of Italian hate was proof against the cool and dispassionate arguments of the royal envoy; who consequently urged the king to lose no time in despatching a strong force to Piedmont, if he wished to retain his possessions in that country. With this advice, judicious as it was, Francis could not at the moment comply; and the French troops, unable to cope with the superior force of their adversaries, were gradually driven from their fortresses until they retained only that of Carmagnole, which was in its turn besieged by the imperialist general.

The Marquis de Saluzzo, whose treason towards Francis we have already recorded, and who was conversant with the weak points of the citadel, undertook the command of the artillery; and in his eagerness to drive the French from his territories, even worked one of the guns with his own hands. Having blown up a couple of houses in order to cover his position, he fired two successive vollies against the city, and was in the act of directing a third, when he was shot dead by a musket-ball. The Marquis del Guasto, who feared that the fall of the marquis might discourage his troops, hastily threw a cloak over the body, and once more summoned the besieged to surrender; promising not only to spare their lives, but to allow them to depart unmolested. The garrison, which consisted only of two hundred men, who

had resisted while a hope remained of their ultimate success, were compelled to accede to the offered terms; upon which the gates were thrown open, and the marquis entered the town, warmly expressing his admiration of the courage with which it had been defended; and desiring that the individual might be pointed out to him who had been on duty at a particular window of the fortress. The soldier who had occupied the post indicated, unsuspicious of the motive of this inquiry, and moreover unconscious that he had shot Saluzzo, immediately stepped forward, when del Guasto caused him to be seized, and hanged from the same spot.

On the 8th of June M. d' Humières reached Pignerol where he established his head-quarters, and reiterated the demand of Du Bellay for a reinforcement of troops; when, in reply to his requisition, the king sent him an assurance that he would himself join him during the month of October, with a large force; and meanwhile the dauphin and Montmorenci proceeded to Lyons, at the head of a small body of men, to join a levy of 15,000 Swiss, who were appointed to meet them in that city for the purpose of continuing the operations in Italy.

In order to secure the safety of the kingdom during his absence, Francis appointed Charles, Duke d'Orleans, his second son, lieutenant-general in Picardy, Normandy, the Isle of France, and Paris; and attached Martin du Bellay to his person as his chief councillor. Burgundy and Champagne were entrusted to the Duke de Guise; the King of Navarre was declared Governor of Guienne, Languedoc, and Châteaubriand in Brittany; and these arrangements completed, on the 6th of October Francis

in accordance with his promise arrived in his turn at Lyons, with a strong and efficient army, well prepared to resume the campaign.

His approach was no sooner communicated to the Marquis del Guasto, than that general proceeded to lay waste the whole of the country through which the French troops must pass; and transported all the provisions and forage which could be accumulated into the different fortresses of which he had possessed himself; while at the same time he detached Cesare da Napoli with a force of 10,000 men to guard the Pas-de-Suze, by which pass he anticipated that the enemy would attempt to enter Italy. Upon the entrenchments which were hastily thrown up at this point, (already a formidable obstacle in itself to the passage of a strong army,) the devastation of the lower lands, and the near approach of the winter season, Del Guasto confidently trusted for the defence of Piedmont; but as this design could not be concealed from the French scouts, Francis no sooner ascertained his intention, than he hastened to provide for the victualling of his troops, and impressed a large number of horses, which he laded with the produce of the adjacent provinces, for the supply of the camp.

As, however, the greatest difficulty against which the army had to contend was the passage of the Suze, he at once issued orders for the march of his vanguard under the dauphin and Montmorenci; who, on arriving at the entrance of the pass, found the imperialists already awaiting them behind their intrenchments. As the maréchal instantly perceived that it would be vain to attack them in front, it was decided that a

portion of the troops should endeavour to ascend the two precipitous heights, hitherto considered to be inaccessible, which shut in and commanded the defile.

Notwithstanding the extreme difficulty and danger of such an enterprise, it was successfully accomplished during the night, and with so much caution, that Cesare da Napoli never once had cause to suspect that his position was hopelessly forced; nor was it until dawn that he became aware of the perilous emergency in which he was placed. But when, as morning broke, the imperialists found themselves exposed to a heavy fire of musketry from the rocks, against which they could neither shelter nor defend themselves, while their intrenchments were vigorously assailed in front by the main body of the troops under the dauphin and the maréchal, they were not long ere they discovered that the post which they had hitherto believed to be impregnable was not even tenable; and accordingly they fled in such haste and confusion, that they abandoned not only their baggage, but also the store of provisions which they had housed in the town of Suze. Montmorenci at once hastened to possess himself of the important pass thus abruptly deserted; and having strongly garrisoned both the town and the fortress, descended into the valley to await the arrival of the king and the main body of the army.

Del Guasto was no sooner apprised that the French had made themselves masters of the pass, than he raised the siege of Pignerol, which, but for this fortunate occurrence, would have been shortly compelled to surrender from famine; and immediately marched his army towards Turin, with the intention of taking that city while the

enemy were engaged in securing their new conquest. Montmorenci had, however, foreseen this contingency, and willingly yielded to the solicitations of the dauphin, who pursued the imperialist general so vigorously, that he compelled him to pass the Po, and to encamp at Montcalier. As the prince subsequently, however, relaxed in his march in order to possess himself of some small fortresses in the neighbourhood, as well as to relieve Turin, where the garrison were exposed to such severe privation that they had been reduced to subsist on horses, rats, and even food of a still more revolting description, the marquis resolved to re-cross the river, and entrench himself at the entrance of the bridge; but the dauphin no sooner became aware of this movement, than he pressed forward in the hope of forcing him to an engagement. In this expectation he was, however, disappointed; as Del Guasto immediately returned to his camp, and finally took shelter under the guns of Ast; while, on his reaching Montcalier, the prince found himself in possession not only of the town, but also of an enormous mass of grain, which sufficed for the support of the garrison of Turin throughout the entire year.

The French troops, having strengthened the town, where they found the inhabitants zealous in seconding their measures, next encamped at Villedestellon, near Guiers, which was strongly garrisoned by the enemy. Constant skirmishes consequently took place, and Montmorenci had determined at once to commence the siege, when his operations were suddenly arrested by a courier from the king, who conveyed to the maréchal his express commands that he should not enter into any further

hostilities until he was himself at the head of his army.

The mortification alike of the dauphin and his general exceeded all bounds when this order reached them, but they were compelled to obey; Francis, still untaught by experience, was jealous of the successes of his own son; and he was, moreover, apprehensive that his enemies might attribute his diligence in overrunning Piedmont to his desire of forming a coalition with Solyman which would have ensured the destruction of Italy, and rendered his name odious to all Christendom; it being matter of notoriety that the sultan was at that moment engaged in the formation of a more formidable army than any with which he had previously menaced Europe, and that his fleet was already prepared for their conveyance to the Italian shores. Under these circumstances, therefore, the French king preferred the alternative of terminating the war by a negotiation; and pretexting the pledge which he had given to the Queen of Hungary, he not only renewed the truce already accorded to the Low Countries for three additional months, but, at the solicitation of the pope and the Venetians, extended it to Piedmont.

The document authorizing this prolonged cessation of hostilities, was signed on the 16th of November, in the presence of the king himself, with orders that it should be published on the 27th of the same month, and that immediately after its promulgation the two armies should be simultaneously disbanded. The arrangement was favourable to the interests of both powers, as it was decreed that each should retain the territory of which he had possessed himself during the campaign, with liberty

to garrison the fortresses, and strengthen the cities; its only victim was the unfortunate Duke of Savoy, whose interests were thus sacrificed by both monarchs, and who saw himself despoiled of all his ducal inheritance save the city and citadel of Nice.

The truce was no sooner officially concluded, than Francis, having disbanded the costly army which he had experienced so much difficulty in raising, re-passed the Alps, and established himself at Montpellier; having appointed M. de Montejan his lieutenant-general in Piedmont, and bestowed upon Guillaume du Bellay the governorship of Turin. He then despatched the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Maréchal de Montmorenci to Leucate, to meet the imperial envoys, who were authorized on the part of the emperor to enter into negotiations for effecting a permanent peace between the two hostile sovereigns.

The proposals that were transmitted by Charles were no longer couched in the arrogant terms which he had formerly adopted. He offered to bestow the hand of his niece, the elder daughter of the King of the Romans, with the duchy of Milan as her dowry, upon Charles, Duke d'Orleans, on condition that the French king would confirm the treaties of Cambray and Madrid, restore Hesdin and the territories of the Duke of Savoy, co-operate with himself in effecting the entire pacification of Europe, and consent that the Duke d'Orleans should reside at the imperial court for three years after his marriage; or, failing this concession, that he should retain the fortresses of Milan in his own possession during the same period.

Although, in order to second the emperor in the re-establishment of a general peace, Francis was required not only to join in a league against the Turks, but also to abandon the German Protestants, he raised no objection to this clause of the treaty. He had already proved that, in order to ensure his own interests, he could desert those of his allies without compunction; and at this particular period nothing could be more desirable to him than a cessation of hostilities; but the demand respecting the sojourn of his son in Spain, or his cession of the Milanese cities, appeared to imply some covert design on the part of Charles to which he at once demurred. On the 10th of January, 1538, he accordingly replied to the effect that he held his claim to the duchy to be indefeasible, although he was willing to receive it as the dowry of the emperor's nicece, and to effect a marriage between her and his son; but that he considered it only just that he should either retain his fortresses, or receive those of Milan simultaneously with their evacuation.

As neither power appeared disposed to yield this point, the ministers on both sides agreed to prolong the truce until the 1st of June; and at the close of the congress the French ambassadors hastened to rejoin Francis at Moulins, where he was awaiting the result of the negotiation, in order to acquaint him with the obstacles which opposed themselves to the project of peace that had been mooted by the emperor.

At this period the favour of Montmorenci had reached its culminating point. He was, as we have shown, already a marshal and grand-master of France; but there was still a higher dignity to be attained; and it was pre-

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cisely at Moulins, the capital of Bourbon's appanage,—at Moulins, where the king had once condescended to visit the rebel duke, on what was affirmed to be a bed of sickness,—that he conferred the sword of Connétable, (which had remained unappropriated since the defection of that prince,) upon Montmorenci, as a reward for the valuable services which he had rendered to France during the war in Italy; while at the same time he confided to him the absolute disposal of his finances. This ceremony took place on the 10th of February, with extreme magnificence, in the presence of the princes and all the great nobles of the state; and when the new connétable had been duly invested with the insignia of his exalted office, the *báton* of maréchal, vacant by his promotion, was bestowed upon the Admiral d' Annebaut; and that of Fleuranges, who had fallen at Peronne, upon M. de Montejan.

In the spring of this year, the Chancellor Antoine du Bourg, who was following in the train of the king on his return to Lyons, was thrown from his mule; and, owing to the density of the crowd, was so severely trampled upon by the horses of the royal retinue, that he expired before he could be removed from the spot. He was succeeded in his office by Guillaume Poyet, the president of the parliament, who had rendered himself conspicuous from the part which he had taken in the process sustained by Louise de Savoie against the Duke de Bourbon.

CHAPTER XIV.

[1538.]

PAUL III. ENDEAVOURS TO EFFECT A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE EMPEROR AND THE FRENCH KING—A MEETING OF THE THREE POTENTATES IS PROPOSED AT NICE—ALARM OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY—HE APPEALS TO THE EMPEROR—HIS ENVOY IS COLDLY RECEIVED—THE POPULACE OF NICE CLOSE THEIR GATES AGAINST THE POPE—PERIL OF QUEEN ELEONORA—THE POPE MEDIATES BETWEEN THE TWO SOVEREIGNS—THE TRUCE IS RENEWED FOR A PERIOD OF TEN YEARS—THE THREE POTENTATES SEPARATE—DESTITUTION OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY—THE EMPEROR DESPATCHES AN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCIS—THE TWO SOVEREIGNS MEET AT AIGUES-MORTES—LA BELLE FERONNIÈRE—ILLNESS OF THE FRENCH KING—INCREASING POWER OF MONTMORENCI—REVOLT OF GHENT—CHARLES V. OBTAINS PERMISSION TO TRAVERSE THE FRENCH TERRITORIES—MADAME D'ÉTAMPES AND THE CONNÉTABLE—A COURT INTRIGUE—A COURT BUFFOON—THE ENAMELLED CHAIN—MONTMORENCI LOSES THE FAVOUR OF THE KING.

CHAPTER XIV.

[1538.]

THE menacing position assumed by the Sultan, and the consequent jeopardy of the Italian states, had excited the apprehensions of Paul III; who, aware that he could effect nothing so long as the emperor and the French king remained at enmity, took advantage of the momentary pause afforded by the truce to attempt their reconciliation. In order to accomplish this object, he despatched a legate to each sovereign, through whom he entreated them to meet at some convenient spot on the frontiers of Provence; volunteering, should they accede to his request, despite his great age, (for he had already attained his seventy-fifth year,) to join them there, and to act as a mediator between them. In conclusion, he proposed Nice as an eligible place for the conference; a suggestion which filled the Duke of Savoy with consternation, that city being the sole portion of his duchy which still remained to him.

Such a proposal, coming as it did not only from the head of the church, but also from an aged man whose infirmities rendered so long a journey a fatiguing and even

dangerous undertaking, admitted of no hesitation on the part of either monarch; although the French king, after he had declared his readiness to meet His Holiness whensoever and wheresoever he should see fit to appoint, hesitated to fulfil his promise when he was apprised that the pontiff hoped during his interview with the emperor, to obtain the imperial consent to a marriage between his nephew Ottavio Farnese, the elder son of the Duke of Parma, and Marguerite d'Autriche, the natural daughter of Charles; whose husband, Alessandro de' Medici, had been assassinated during the previous year. The French ambassador at the papal court, and the Cardinal de Macon, having ventured to hint to His Holiness that this project was displeasing to their sovereign, Paul III. answered with considerable asperity; and then, after a moment's reflection, he inquired with a slight shade of sarcasm if it were forbidden for a pope to ally his family with that of a sovereign prince; adding, that the King of France might, should he so will it, confer the same honour upon the house of Farnese as the emperor, by admitting one of its members into his own.

Meanwhile the Duke of Savoy, who, as we have already shown, began to apprehend that he should lose the last remnant of his territories if he permitted the conference of the three potentates to be held at Nice, despatched an envoy to Charles V. to entreat that he would not compel him to resign his citadel to the pope; and while awaiting his reply, he declared to a chamberlain whom the pontiff had sent to make the request, that he could not take so important a step without the consent of the emperor. The messenger met Charles at

Villa Franca, where he communicated the request of his master; but in answer to the entreaties of the duke, the emperor coldly remarked that he would advise M. de Savoie to comply with the request of His Holiness without further delay.

Before this mortifying intelligence was made known to him, the duke received a visit from the Viscount de Martigues and the Bishop of Lausanne, who strongly urged him to refuse the use of the citadel to the pope; and assured him on the part of the Connétable de Montmorenci, that in the event of his desiring to form a closer alliance with France, either in his own person, or that of his son the Prince of Piedmont, the king would readily consent to his wishes. The duke, however, had long learnt to mistrust the promises of his selfish allies; and he accordingly answered without hesitation, that he was grateful for the honour which was proposed to him, but that having so recently lost his wife, he had no intention of contracting a second marriage, while his son was too young to avail himself of the proffered privilege; but that if, instead of so high an alliance, his majesty would graciously reinstate him in his possessions, he should consider himself his debtor to the last hour of his life.

Finding from the reply of the emperor that he had no other resource, the duke, who was still as unwilling as before to admit the two belligerent sovereigns within his last stronghold, and who was, at the same time, too timid openly to oppose his imperial master, determined to have recourse to the citizens, to whom he represented the inevitable consequences of introducing a foreign garrison into the citadel; and, as he had anticipated, his

arguments were so ably seconded by their own fears, that when the officers of the pope's household arrived to prepare the apartments allotted to him for his reception, all the population rose *en masse*, declaring that the entrance of foreign troops into their city was an infringement upon their privileges to which they would never consent; and having announced this determination, they proceeded without further delay to close their gates. The pope, who soon after reached Nice, was accordingly compelled to take up his residence at the monastery of San Francisco in the suburbs; while the emperor cast anchor at Villa Franca, a little port in the states of Monaco, where he remained on board his galley; and Francis, accompanied by Queen Eleonora, the Queen of Navarre, the dauphiness, and his two sons, established himself at Villa Nuova, about two miles distant.

Before the conference was opened, the French queen proceeded to Villa Franca by sea to visit her brother, who had caused a wooden pier to be constructed for her accommodation from the point at which she must cast anchor to the port; and as she left her galley he advanced along this pier to receive and conduct her on shore, when the frail fabric gave way beneath their weight, and they were both precipitated into the sea, with several of their attendants. Fortunately, prompt assistance being at hand, the whole party were quickly rescued from their perilous situation.

Although the two sovereigns had thus become close neighbours, the pope could not prevail upon them to consent to a personal interview; and he consequently expressed his willingness to negotiate between them.

A marquee was accordingly pitched in the court of the convent, in which he twice received the emperor, and subsequently the French king and his sons; while the royal ladies by whom Francis was accompanied, in their turn made visits both to Charles and the pontiff.

During these interviews Paul III. endeavoured by every argument in his power to reconcile the jarring interests of the two jealous potentates, and proposed sundry conditions and concessions by which the peace which he so earnestly desired might be concluded; but while he was enabled to overrule every other objection on both sides, he found himself powerless on the subject of the Milanese; and he was finally compelled to content himself with effecting a renewal of the truce for ten years, during which time he hoped to carry into execution the offensive league into which he had entered with the emperor and the Venetian states against the Infidels.

The truce was no sooner signed than Francis left Villa Nuova for Avignon, while the pope returned to Rome, and the emperor proceeded by sea to Barcelona; and meanwhile the ill-fated Duke of Savoy, who had incurred the displeasure of both potentates, by each of whom he was openly charged with having excited the revolt of the citizens of Nice, found himself even more powerless than ever, the whole remaining portion of his territories being possessed by the two belligerent sovereigns, who were severally fortifying their strongholds within his dominions with a deliberate caution which rendered him hopeless of their ultimate recovery. He was, moreover, fated to undergo another and a crowning mortification a few months subsequently, when the connétable, on the part of

Francis, proposed to him to exchange the county of Nice for lands in France to the value of twenty thousand annual crowns. The despoiled duke could ill brook this last degradation, and declined the offer with an asperity and vehemence unusual to him; declaring that he had already been victimised sufficiently both by his friends and by his enemies; and that although he now held little of his duchy save the empty title which it had conferred upon him, he would, nevertheless, at least live and die Count of Nice. He, moreover, as if to give additional weight to this declaration, immediately adopted a new device, which consisted of a naked arm grasping a sword, with the motto *Spoliatis arma supersunt;* but, as he had never been remarkable for his prowess in the field, this empty vaunt only excited the contempt of his oppressors.

Contrary winds having compelled the emperor, while on his return to Spain, to cast anchor at the island of St. Marguerite, he despatched from thence a nobleman to Avignon to greet the French monarch, and to express his desire to have an interview with him; for which purpose he offered, should his proposal be accepted, to land at Aigues-Mortes.

Francis, equally surprised and gratified, eagerly acceded to the proposition; and, in order to show his confidence in the good faith and friendly intentions of his imperial visitor, he proceeded without further delay to Marseilles, where he rowed off in his barge to the galley of Charles to bid him welcome. As he reached the vessel, the emperor extended his hand to assist him in gaining the deck, and responded by an affectionate salutation to his

smiling address of—"Brother, here I am once more your prisoner." This proof of confidence, as it subsequently appeared, was fully appreciated by the emperor; for when, at the close of a long and friendly conference, during which he had requested the French king to admit Doria to his presence, and the Genoese admiral had been courteously received, the latter requested permission to set sail with Francis on board, and thus terminate the war, his proposition was indignantly rejected.

On the following day the emperor landed at Aigues-Mortes, where he was received with great magnificence; and the two courts vied with each other in courtesy and friendliness. Every appearance of jealousy or hostility was at an end, and the most complete confidence was exhibited on both sides. But perhaps the most happy individual of that courtly circle was the queen, who, after having long despaired of a reconciliation between her brother and her husband, now saw them seated side by side in the most familiar conversation. The principal officers of both sovereigns were admitted to the presence; and every allusion to former meetings of a less amicable nature was mutually avoided. The dauphin and dauphiness, the Queen of Navarre, and the Duchess d' Etampes were severally presented to the emperor, who expressed his admiration of the galaxy of beauty by which his brother-monarch was surrounded. None would have supposed, while gazing on the brilliant group assembled in that obscure seaport, that it included the two enemies who had so long troubled the peace of Europe, and made all the interests of Christendom subservient to their ambition.

The festivals continued for four days; and while the nobles and ladies of the two courts were occupied by pleasure and gallantry, several long and secret interviews took place between the sovereigns, to which none were admitted save the queen, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and the connétable on the part of France; and Granvelle, the keeper of the seals, and the grand commander Gouvea, on that of the emperor. The subject of their discussions was not made public, but they nevertheless tended to increase the alarm of the Duke of Savoy, who hastened to ratify the truce by which he was despoiled of his territories, and which he had hitherto refused to do; lest he should draw down upon himself the further hostility of the two sovereigns, thus suddenly and inexplicably reconciled.

On his return to his capital, Francis plunged once more into an abyss of dissipation; and regardless alike of his failing health and his regal dignity, vied in profligacy with his arrogant mistress. Satiated with the affectations of the court beauties, and the ceremonious restraints of his own circle, he at this period sought his conquests in a more humble sphere of society; and, in order the more readily to pursue his intrigues, adopted the habit of disguising himself as an archer of the royal guard, in which guise he was accustomed at twilight to perambulate the streets of the city. On one of these excursions he was attracted by the extreme loveliness of a fair citizen, the wife of an armourer, who chanced as he passed to be standing at the door of her dwelling, conversing with a neighbour; and after having remained for a moment steadfastly gazing upon her animated face

and graceful figure, he beckoned as he moved on to a chamberlain by whom he was accompanied, and with a significant gesture drew his attention to the unconscious beauty.

"You will recognise the house?" he said in a low voice.

"Readily, Sire."

"Enough. The day after to-morrow I shall be at the château of Madrid."

His attendant bowed in silence; and ere long the king returned to the palace of the Tournelles.

The royal confidant had no sooner been dismissed than he mounted his horse and retraced his steps to the Rue de Fer; where, pretexting business, he entered the shop of the armourer, during whose absence from home his beautiful partner was accustomed to superintend the commercial interests of the house. The appearance of such a customer, even at that somewhat untimely hour, failed to excite any suspicion of his motive in *La belle Feronnière;* nor was it until he changed the discourse from the casques and corselets amid which they stood to a more tender subject, that she discovered the imprudence of which she had been guilty. After having exhausted himself in the most hyperbolical admiration of her attractions, he proceeded to appease her indignation at his impertinence, by declaring that she totally misapprehended the purpose of his visit; which was, as he asserted, to inform her that the queen, who was desirous to retain about her person the most beautiful women of the kingdom, having chanced to see her during one of her progresses through the city, had been struck by her appearance, and desired to establish her in her household.

For a time the young and timid woman stood abashed, assuring the messenger that he must be mistaken, as neither her birth nor her position entitled her to so much honour; but the reiterated assurances and dazzling promises of the royal emissary at length produced their effect, and she consented to accompany him to the palace of the Tournelles, where he declared that she would be instantly admitted to the presence of the queen.

Having closely enveloped herself in her hood and mantle, the fair citizen finally permitted herself to be lifted upon the pillion with which her treacherous companion had come provided; but it was not long ere she discovered that, instead of proceeding towards the palace, they were travelling in a totally different direction; and they had consequently no sooner reached the gate by which they were about to leave the city, than she called loudly for help, when a party of the night-watch, alarmed by her cries, hastily seized their arms, and attempted to arrest the progress of her ravisher. We have, however, already shown that the civic guard of Paris was composed of men who cared little to expose themselves to danger; and, accordingly, they no sooner saw two of their number cut down by the undaunted horseman, than they fell back, and abandoned the terrified victim to her fate.

Whatever might have been the original scruples of *La belle Feronnière*, it is certain that she soon became reconciled to her fate; and that the splendour of a royal palace, and the *prestige* of a royal lover, sufficed to blind her to her moral degradation; but this *liaison*, which soon became the fable of all Paris, was not destined to

be of long endurance, the increasing infirmities of the king compelling him to restore her to her family at the expiration of three months, at once enriched and disgraced.

The extreme beauty of this woman, whose real station in life has never been thoroughly ascertained; and of whose rank and position we have, consequently, been compelled to adopt the most popular version; was so remarkable, that, although an intrigue of such brief duration might well have been passed over in silence, her name has become matter of history; and the life of Francis I. would, consequently, be incomplete were the episode of *La belle Feronnière* omitted. Her portrait, which adorns the Musée at Paris, is one of surpassing loveliness; the forehead is high and smooth, the eyes large, dove-like, and expressive, the nose finely shaped, the mouth faultless, and the whole outline of the face full of feminine grace and dignity.

About this period Francis was attacked by so severe an indisposition, that he was for a considerable time unable to attend to the business of the state, the whole of which devolved upon Montmorenci, who assumed an authority to which no former connétable had ever aspired. His avowed admiration of the emperor, and his equally undisguised aversion to Henry VIII, awoke the misgivings of many of the higher nobility, especially those of the ambassadors at the several European courts, who still felt the same mistrust of the motives of Charles V. as they had previously entertained; and who were loud in their regrets that France should for his sake deprive herself of the allies which it had cost her so much blood

and gold to secure. Montmorenci, however, haughtily disregarded their representations, and thus unconsciously laid the foundation of his own overthrow.

The policy of the emperor in thus suddenly and with such apparent inconsistency seeking the friendship of the French monarch, soon revealed itself. The expenses of the war having compelled him to levy new imposts upon his subjects, he had, in 1536, directed Queen Marie, the governante of the Low Countries, to raise a sum of money in Flanders, by taxation or otherwise, which might enable him to pursue his operations. In compliance with this command, she proceeded to levy a subsidy of one million two hundred thousand florins on the Flemish provinces, of which the city of Ghent was to furnish the sum of four hundred thousand. To this imposition the citizens resolutely refused to submit; alleging that by the ancient privileges conceded to their city they were exempted from the payment of all taxes; and as they persisted in their refusal, the queen, in order to terrify them into submission, caused several of the principal inhabitants to be arrested, and declared her determination to retain them as prisoners until her orders were obeyed. Firm in their resistance, the Ghentese disregarded her menaces; and for nearly a year, during which their relatives and townsmen remained her captives, they contested the point; and, finally, in August 1537, they presented a petition to the governante, in which they set forth in detail the privileges which had been accorded to them by former sovereigns, and by virtue of which they were, as they had stated, exempted from taxation.

In reply to this document the queen-dowager informed them that she would cause their claims to exemption to be duly investigated, either by her own council, or by the parliament of Malines, but that meanwhile they must furnish their quota to the general subsidy; a decision by which they were so much exasperated, that they immediately determined to revolt against her authority. The citizens, accordingly, flew to arms, compelled the imperial officers to leave the city, and took possession of several fortified places in the environs, declaring that they recognised no sovereign save the King of France; to whom they at the same time appealed for protection, pledging themselves, should he afford them his support, to render him master of the whole of the Low Countries.

The opportunity was tempting; and there can be little doubt that had the emperor received such a proposition from a revolted province of France, he would have evinced no hesitation in acceding to the request; but Francis, with a more generous policy, (in which he was strengthened by the advice of Montmorenci and the entreaties of the queen,) not only refused to accept an allegiance extorted by fear, but even hastened to apprise his brother-monarch of the menacing attitude assumed by his Flemish subjects.

Charles V. was no sooner made aware of the extent of the emergency than he resolved to proceed to the Low Countries, and to effect the immediate suppression of the rebellious faction, which was becoming daily more formidable; but however judicious such a project could not fail to prove, there were serious obstacles to its accomplishment. In order to reach this portion of his dominions,

it was necessary that the emperor should either make his way through Italy into Germany, where the animosity of the Protestant princes would render it necessary for him to be accompanied by a strong army, in which case he might be subjected by casualties to a delay that would enable the Ghentese to strengthen their position, and thus frustrate the object of his journey; or by sea, where, in the event of contrary winds, he might be cast upon the English coast, and so fall into the hands of Henry VIII, with whom he was at that moment at open enmity; or, finally, through France, which was at once the shortest and the surest route. Had Charles V. been possessed of less skill in physiology than he displayed upon this occasion, it is probable that this would nevertheless have been his last alternative; but he was so well acquainted with the peculiar disposition of the French king, that he unhesitatingly determined to confide in his generosity. He had, moreover, as he was aware, a warm partisan in the then all-powerful connétable; nor did he fail to calculate upon the influence of his sister, although he had long known that her position at the court was at once onerous and unhappy.

Having made this resolution, he directed the Bishop of Tarbes, who was at that period the French ambassador at his court, to write to Montmorenci, requesting him to obtain the consent of Francis to his traversing the French territories, in order to reach the Low Countries with greater expedition; and pledging himself that, should this be accorded, he would, in requital of so signal a favour, at once meet the wishes of the French king by investing either himself or one of his sons with

the sovereignty of the duchy of Milan, on condition that no further concessions should be demanded of him.

Francis, having convened his council, decided upon acceding to the request; but while every other member of the assembly insisted that, before he was permitted to pass the frontier, Charles should be compelled to give good sureties of his peaceable intentions, and declare in writing that he traversed the French soil only upon sufferance, Montmorenci alone protested against such an exhibition of distrust, which he declared to be unworthy of so great a monarch as Francis, and calculated to lessen his dignity in the eyes of the very sovereign upon whom he was about to confer a signal and important benefit.

A warm discussion took place, but it was finally decided by the king that the advice of the connétable should be adopted; and that the emperor should be invited to enter France, not only unconditionally, but also that hostages should be offered in the persons of the two princes for his safety during his sojourn in the country.

This was fated to be the last occasion upon which Montmorenci was enabled to prove to the other nobles of the court the extent of his influence over the mind of the monarch. We have already alluded to his romantic passion for the queen; and Francis had no sooner passed from the council-chamber to the apartments of the Duchess d'Etampes to announce to her the approaching advent of the emperor, than the mine was sprung which was to accomplish his overthrow.

As the king entered, the beautiful favourite was seated before her toilette, wrapped in a robe of silver brocade, and almost buried in the cloud of luxuriant hair which one of her women was preparing to bind up. On his appearance the whole of the attendants withdrew, and the enamoured monarch hastened to impart his tidings.

"And this, Sire, if I understand aright;" said the duchess with a supercilious smile; "was the advice of the connétable?"

"Even so, *ma mie*;" replied Francis, as he passed his fingers fondly through the dark tresses which fell from the tapestried coffer upon which Anne de Pisseleu was seated, to the ground. "And it appeared to me to be so chivalrous, and so high-hearted, that I resolved at once to follow it. You will be glad to see our brother Charles again, shall you not? On the faith of a gentleman! he esteemed your beauty at its just value."

"Her majesty must be enraptured at such a prospect," said the insolent mistress with the same equivocal expression, and totally regardless of the question put by the king. "Montmorenci is an able courtier."

"Doubtlessly it will afford her pleasure;" replied the monarch, with a languid yawn; "I will desire him to acquaint her that she owes this gratification in some degree to his agency."

"He has, in all probability, already accomplished so agreeable an errand;" spitefully retorted the duchess.

"Our good connétable is assuredly enamoured of Charles of Austria;" replied Francis, as he listlessly unlocked a costly casket of inlaid sandal-wood which

stood upon the toilet, and began to examine the jewels it contained.

"His imperial majesty is the queen's brother;" said Madame d'Etampes, still maintaining the tone of bitter sarcasm in which she had hitherto indulged; "But, remember, Sire;" she added more emphatically; "that, although he be the brother of your queen, he has ever proved himself your own enemy; nor do I anticipate that you will henceforward find him other than he has been to this day. It is not yet too late; recall your dangerous resolution; and do not risk the safety alike of your person and your kingdom in order to afford to M. de Montmorenci the privilege of extending the 'good morrows' for which he is so famous."

A cloud rose to the brow of the king, which was rapidly succeeded by a smile. "You are truly, at this moment, refuting those calumniators, Anne;" he said tenderly; "who accuse you of too great a sensibility for the connétable."

A gesture of proud disdain was the only reply vouchsafed by the haughty favourite.

"We must afford our imperial guest a splendid welcome;" pursued Francis after a pause; "we must give him good reason to remember his visit to our dominions."

"And you will do well, Sire;" said the duchess eagerly. "Remember Pavia; remember Madrid. Let him come, since such is your will; but once in France, suffer him not to repass the frontier until you are revenged. You have dungeons as secure as those of the Escurial, and jailors as sure and as zealous as M. de Lannoy."

Francis started. "You cannot be serious, Madame," he said incredulously.

"At least, Sire;" persisted Madame d'Etampes; "I shall not be unsupported in my advice, like the connétable; you will find that all the best and noblest spirits in France will counsel you as I do."

As she uttered this assurance, Triboulet the king's jester, a misshapen dwarf who was permitted to intrude upon his privacy at all hours, and to whom rumour assigned an office about the monarch's person infinitely more degrading than that which he ostensibly filled, quietly entered the apartment; and approaching a buffet, poured out a goblet of Malvoisie, which he carried to his royal master.

"Nevertheless, I am resolved;" said Francis, in reply to his fair companion; "Charles has asked for a safe passage through our dominions, and he shall depart as freely as he comes."

These words had scarcely passed the lips of the king, when Triboulet, replacing the yet untasted wine upon the buffet, drew an ivory tablet from the pocket of his pour-point, and deliberately inscribed some characters upon it.

"What have you there, *maître-fou?*" asked the monarch, amused by the assumed solemnity of his manner.

"I am making a fresh entry in my journal, which is filling rapidly;" was the calm reply. "Men have called me 'fool,' but I have my revenge daily; I am busied upon a catalogue of madmen, and I shall ere long be short of space."

"Let me see this famous list;" said the king, extending his hand for the tablets. "Why, how now, Sir!" he exclaimed angrily; "when did you venture to add the name of my imperial brother to such a record as this?"

"Only a moment back;" answered the dwarf perfectly unmoved; "when I heard you tell fair Madame Anne that he was about to visit France."

The duchess laughed triumphantly, and threw a golden coin into the hand of the jester.

"And when he has returned to his own dominions, sirrah, what will you next do?" inquired Francis.

"Then;" said Triboulet; "if, indeed, Charles should ever live to see the day you mention, I shall efface his name, and insert yours."

"The fool speaks wisdom," said Madame d'Etampes.

"It may be so;" was the reply of the monarch; "but it is mere worldly wisdom, and unworthy of a great sovereign. I will not recall my pledge."

During this interview, another had taken place between the queen and the connétable, which was destined to involve important consequences. Montmorenci had related in detail to his royal mistress the proceedings that had taken place in the council, and she had warmly expressed her gratitude for the eminent service which he had so boldly rendered to the emperor. With true feminine tact she at once discovered the motive of his conduct; but she, nevertheless, carefully abstained from betraying any symptom of such a conviction; and as the manner of Montmorenci became more impassioned, she gradually assumed a coldness of demeanour which was foreign to her feelings.

At the close of the interview, however, conscious that she had ill responded to the zeal and devotion he had displayed, and relieved, by his absence, from the terror of misapprehension which his presence never failed to inspire, she became anxious to convince him that she was less insensible to his good offices than she had striven to appear; and after revolving many projects in her mind, unable to overcome her reluctance to address him in writing, she resolved to send to him, by one of her pages, a rich chain of amber set in enamelled gold which had been wrought for her in Florence, and was of great value.

It chanced upon this particular occasion that a slight indisposition caused the queen to receive her evening circle in her own apartments; and as she had hesitated for a long time ere she could decide on the propriety of conferring upon the connétable so marked a token of her favour, the company were already assembling when she confided the chain to her messenger. It happened also, that by a singular coincidence, Francis, who had never hitherto visited the queen save by the state gallery, was induced, by some sudden caprice, to avail himself of a private staircase, in ascending which he encountered the page, who from boyish vanity had flung the costly chain about his neck, and thus decorated was proceeding to perform his errand.

The quick eye of the king enabled him at a glance to recognise the ornament; and as the startled youth drew back to allow him to pass, he laid his hand upon the chain, and inquired how he became possessed of so costly a jewel. The page, who was totally unconscious of the

necessity of concealment, and who only apprehended a reprimand for his presumption in having availed himself of such an opportunity to gratify his ostentatious tastes, unhesitatingly replied that he had been entrusted by the queen to convey it to the connétable; at the same time accounting for the fact of its being suspended from his own neck, by declaring that in his dread of losing it by the way, he had adopted that method as the most secure; and imploring the king to pardon a liberty which had been suggested by caution.

"Fear nothing;" said Francis composedly; "you are both prudent and trustworthy; but such a responsibility is too great for your age. Give me the chain. I will myself deliver it to M. le Connétable."

The page obeyed, and the amber chain was placed in the hands of the king, who at once threw it about his own neck, and then pursued his way to the queen's apartments.

The amazement and alarm of Eleonora may be conceived, when as she rose to receive her royal husband, the first object upon which her eye rested was the amber chain, rendered unusually conspicuous by the fact that Francis wore a plain pourpoint of maroon-coloured velvet, without embroidery of any description. He, however, approached her in his usual courteous, but cold manner; and, after having made a few civil inquiries regarding her health, without any allusion to the obnoxious decoration, turned away to converse with Madame de Brézé.

The anticipated arrival of the emperor furnished ample subject for conversation throughout the evening; but the spirits of the poor queen, which had been greatly

elated at the prospect of again seeing her imperial brother, were painfully subdued by her apprehensions of the misconstruction which the king could not fail to put upon the motive of her present to the connétable; and when Montmorenci, a short time subsequently, drew near to her with his unvarying 'good morrow,' she replied by a bow so chilling as to excite still further the suspicions of Francis, who had jealously watched the meeting. The inferences of the Duchess d'Etampes were now explained; and although the monarch was too proud to betray that he was conscious of a rival in one of his own subjects, and too indifferent to his royal consort to feel wounded in his affections, he, nevertheless, conceived a hatred towards the connétable which was ere long fated to produce its effect.

CHAPTER XV.

[1539-40.]

THE EMPEROR ARRIVES AT BAYONNE—HE REFUSES TO RECEIVE HOSTAGES—THE TWO SOVEREIGNS MEET AT CHATELLERAULT—TRIUMPHANT RECEPTION OF CHARLES V.—DISTRUST OF THE EMPEROR—UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCES—THE IMPERIAL RETINUE—A COURT BALL—THE DIAMOND RING—THE EMPEROR ENTERS PARIS—THE FRENCH PRINCES AND MONTMORENCI ACCOMPANY HIM TO VALENCIENNES—CHARLES REFUSES TO RATIFY THE CESSION OF THE MILANESE—FRANCIS BECOMES SUSPICIOUS OF HIS COUNSELLORS—ARREST OF THE MARÉCHAL DE BRION CHABOT—CHABOT IS TRIED AND CONDEMNED TO DEATH—CRUEL POLICY OF POYET—CHABOT IS PARDONED BY THE KING—ARREST OF POYET—FEMALE INFLUENCE AT COURT—DEATH OF CHABOT—THE EMPEROR PROPOSES AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN HIS SON PHILIP OF SPAIN AND THE PRINCESS OF NAVARRE—AND THAT OF HIS OWN DAUGHTER AND THE DUKE D'ORLEANS—REFUSAL OF FRANCIS TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIRED CONDITIONS—DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE KING AND QUEEN OF NAVARRE—THE NEGOTIATION IS PURSUED—MARRIAGE OF THE DUKE DE CLEVES AND THE PRINCESS OF NAVARRE—MADAME D'ETAMPES AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE KING'S GUARD—EXILE OF MONTMORENCI FROM THE COURT—THE MARRIAGE FESTIVITIES—THE DUKE DE CLEVES LEAVES FRANCE—BENVENUTO CELLINI ARRIVES AT THE FRENCH COURT—EXILE OF THE CARDINAL DE LORRAINE.

CHAPTER XV.

[1539-40.]

THE emperor commenced his journey without further delay; and the French king no sooner learnt that he was on his way to the frontier, than, being unable from illness to undertake so long a journey, he commanded the two princes and the connétable to proceed to Bayonne, giving them express injunctions to receive the imperial visitor with every demonstration of respect and affection, and to escort him in like manner to the capital.

In accordance with these instructions the dauphin, the Duke d'Orleans, and Montmorenci, accompanied by a great number of the court nobles sumptuously mounted and apparelled, set forth in time to reach the city before the arrival of Charles; and the dauphin had no sooner greeted him in the name of the king, than he hastened, according to the directions he had received, to offer himself and his brother as hostages to the emperor until he should have reached the Low Countries. Of this proposition, however, Charles under the circumstances found it inexpedient to avail himself; and he consequently replied, that after the important service which had just been conferred upon him by the king his brother, he should be inexcusable did he entertain the

slightest suspicion of his good faith. The august party accordingly proceeded in company to Bourdeaux, where they were welcomed with acclamation, and entertained with a magnificence worthy of their illustrious rank. During a long sojourn in that city the favour of the connétable daily increased with the emperor, who also lavished upon the young princes the most marked tokens of regard and affection; nor was it without apparent reluctance that he at length resumed his progress through Xaintonge and Poitiers to Chatellerault, where Francis was in person awaiting his imperial guest; and whence, after a few days passed in splendid festivity, and reciprocal assurances of friendship and confidence, the two sovereigns and their brilliant train finally set forward to the capital.

Throughout the whole of their journey, (which occupied a considerable time in consequence of the preparations that had been made in the several cities by which they approached Paris, to render due honours to the emperor,) all the local nobility and militia accompanied the royal travellers to the limits of their respective communes; and although Charles had reached Bayonne in the month of October, he halted for so long a time at Bourdeaux, at Lusignan, and at several other places upon his route, for the purpose of enjoying the sports of the field, that he did not arrive at Poitiers until the 9th of December. His reception in that city exceeded in splendour and ceremonial all that he had hitherto experienced. As he arrived at the gates he was met by the whole nobility of the province, and was conducted into the town by five hundred cavaliers

superbly habited, and followed by two thousand of the citizens dressed in velvet and satin, laced with gold and silver. At Orleans, which he reached on the 20th of December, his escort was composed not only of all the local nobility and militia, but also of a guard of "ninety-two young merchants of the city, mounted upon fine horses, all attired in overcoats of black velvet, with doublets of white satin, fastened by gold buttons; velvet caps, covered with precious stones, and edged with goldsmith's work; and boots of white Spanish leather, with golden spurs. One of these caps was estimated at two thousand crowns; nor was there an individual among them who did not carry upon his person the value of more than two thousand francs in jewellery."

From this description the enormous aggregate expenditure consequent upon the reception of the emperor in France may be inferred. At that period it was calculated at two millions of livres; which, when the relative value of money in those days and our own is remembered, presents an amount amply sufficient to have supplied the French army throughout an entire campaign. In every city upon his passage the doors of the prisons were opened in his presence, and the prisoners liberated in his name, without any regard to the nature of their offences; and no opportunity was permitted to escape which could afford the means of convincing Charles that his visit was intended to make one wide holiday throughout the country.

At Chatellerault a magnificent banquet awaited him; and the two sovereigns, after an interview in which they vied with each other in expressions of affection and regard,

repaired to the stately hall where it had been served up, followed by the princes of the blood and the cardinals. On reaching the table, Francis insisted that the emperor should occupy the upper seat, and after he had with extreme difficulty induced him to do so, he still further testified his respect for his imperial guest by causing a large space to intervene between them.

But still, despite the flattering nature of his reception, Charles V. was ill at ease. He was aware that he had little deserved such a display of confidence and hospitality at the hands of the French king, and accustomed to practise deceit in his own person, he was unable, with all his efforts, entirely to conceal the alarm which he occasionally felt. This apprehension was, moreover, during his sojourn in France heightened by several circumstances, each perhaps trivial in itself, but so ill-timed as to arouse his suspicions that they were not altogether accidental. On one occasion the Duke d'Orleans, who, as we have already stated, was of a gay and thoughtless disposition, and who was moreover extraordinarily active, sprang upon the crupper of the horse which the emperor had just mounted, and flinging his arms about his waist, exclaimed gaily: "Your imperial majesty is my prisoner." Although he recovered his self-possession in an instant, it was remarked by those near him that Charles turned pale, and that it was only by a powerful effort he was enabled to reply to the jest of the young prince.

A short time subsequently, as the chancellor Poyet approached to pay his respects while the emperor was at table, the skirts of his robes became entangled among

the wood which had been piled in a corner of the apartment for the supply of the stove; and as he sought to disengage them, he so disturbed the heap, that a large log upon the summit lost its balance, and fell upon the head of Charles, who remained stunned for several minutes; and although he partially recovered the blow, and affected to make light of the accident to the discomfited minister, he was nevertheless compelled to be bled before he could overcome its effects.

At Amboise, which he subsequently visited, he was destined to encounter two other perils, as easily explained, but equally startling at the moment. On one occasion the tapestried hangings of his bed were fired by an attendant; and on the other he was nearly suffocated by the vapours engendered by a foreign perfume, intended to fill his apartment with an agreeable and refreshing odour. When the latter occurrence took place, the king, irritated by these repeated accidents, and anxious to convince his imperial guest that they were not premeditated, caused the arrest of the unlucky perfumer, and commanded that he should immediately be put to death; a fate which he would inevitably have incurred had not the emperor strenuously demanded his pardon, declaring that he had not visited France to become the cause or witness of a criminal execution.

The imperial retinue was rather elegant than either numerous or magnificent. The great-grandson of Charles the Bold was accompanied only by a hundred men-at-arms, chosen for their personal beauty and dexterity in warlike exercises; by a body of Spanish grandees, whose ambition appeared limited to a desire to excel in the

splendour of their costume the nobles of the French court; and by four-and-twenty pages, habited in costumes of orange, grey, and violet velvet, which were at that period his peculiar colours. He himself was clad in a complete suit of polished armour, girt about the waist by a sash of cloth of gold; and rode an Andalusian horse of extraordinary strength and symmetry. His cap was of black velvet, embroidered with gold and jewels, and his weapons were of the same costly description.

From Chatellerault the illustrious party proceeded to Amboise, where the alarm of the emperor was fated to reach its climax. Assured as he was of the devotion of the connétable, he had not sojourned so long in France without detecting certain indications of his unpopularity with the mass, not only of the nobles, but also of the citizens, which rendered him anxious to pursue his journey to the Low Countries, so soon as this measure could be effected without giving umbrage to his royal entertainer. Meanwhile, however, he dissembled his misgivings, and entered into all the amusements of the court with apparent zest and enjoyment. On the occasion of a ball which he had opened with the queen his sister, and which took place by daylight, as was the common custom of the period, the *royales* and *gaillards*, which were the state dances, were executed with infinite grace and dignity by the dauphiness, the Duchess d'Etampes, and Madame de Brézé; and at their termination the emperor, who had carefully abstained from resenting the neglect that was evinced towards his royal relative, and the supremacy of the favourite who openly usurped her privileges, approached the haughty

duchess, and expressed his admiration of the consummate elegance with which she had acquitted herself of her arduous duties. They were still engaged in conversation, when the king, flattered by the deference shown to his cherished mistress, hastily approached them, and laying his hand upon the arm of Charles V, said gaily:—

"Be sparing of your compliments, good brother; for permit me to assure you that the fair lady who is now bending beneath their weight, was bold enough to advise me to make you my prisoner until you had consented to the revocation of the treaty of Madrid."

A shadow gathered upon the brow of the emperor, and his features assumed a stern expression, as turning from the discomfited favourite he said coldly; "If the advice seem good, your majesty will do well to follow it."

This reply for a moment silenced the whole group; but the king soon rallied, and the amusements resumed their course.

The warning was, however, opportune; for Charles was aware that he could not have a more dangerous enemy than the fascinating and unscrupulous duchess; but he was also conversant with her real character; and, accordingly, a few days afterwards when he was about to seat himself at table, and that Madame d'Etampes, who assumed to herself the office which should by the rules of etiquette have devolved upon a royal princess, presented a napkin, he adroitly drew a magnificent brilliant from his finger, and suffered it to fall to the ground.

The duchess immediately stooped, picked up the jewel, and with a low curtsey presented it on her open palm to its imperial owner.

"Nay, Madame;" said Charles, with an obeisance as profound as her own; "the bauble looks so much more attractive in your hands than in mine that I dare not reclaim it."

"Your Imperial Majesty surely jests;" was the reply of the favourite, as she still tendered the ring; "I am unworthy of so precious a gift."

"Of what are you not worthy, Madame?" said Charles in an accent of gallantry, as he possessed himself of her hand, and passed the gem over one of her slender fingers; "You, who have won the heart of one monarch, need feel no compunction in wearing the jewel of another."

It is needless to explain that the offering was accepted; or that from that moment the avaricious favourite ceased to exhibit any hostility towards the politic donor.

From Amboise the emperor was conducted to Blois, and thence to Fontainebleau, where the fêtes recommenced; but the crowning triumph was his entry into the capital, which took place on the 1st of January, 1540.

The dauphin and the Duke d'Orleans, the princes of the blood, the French cardinals, the parliament, and all the officials of the government met him at the gates; where the two princes took their places upon his right and left hand, while the connétable preceded him with his sword of office unsheathed, as though he were escorting his own sovereign, and so accompanied him through the city. The keys of the several prisons were delivered to him, as they had previously been in the provinces; and before he entered the palace of the Tournelles, he declared

the freedom of their occupants. When he reached the Hôtel de Ville he found all the sheriffs assembled before the portal of the building to compliment him; and at the close of their harangue they presented, as the offering of the city of Paris to its august visitor, a Hercules in silver the size of life, with the lion skin in which he was draped richly gilt and chased. Thence he proceeded in the same state to Notre Dame, where a solemn Te Deum was chanted; after which he was conducted to the palace, and took possession of the magnificent suite of apartments that had been newly decorated for his use; and throughout the whole of the eight days during which he remained the guest of the French king, the most splendid festivals were given in his honour.

On his departure, when he had taken leave of the queen his sister, the queen of Navarre, the dauphiness, and their respective courts, he left the city with the same pomp as he had entered it, accompanied by his royal host and the two princes, and proceeded to Chantilly, where he was entertained in the most costly manner by the connétable.

It is asserted by some historians, that the dauphin, the King of Navarre, and the Duke de Vendôme had entered into a conspiracy to arrest him in the château of Montmorenci; and that the latter was only enabled to dissuade them from their purpose by representing the odium which he should personally incur throughout Europe were he to permit such an outrage to be committed beneath his roof. Be this as it may, however, it is certain that after having passed the night at Chantilly, the emperor on the following day pursued his journey to

St. Quentin without molestation; and having taken leave of the king in that city, proceeded to Valenciennes, still attended by the two princes and the connétable.

On their arrival at Valenciennes, Montmorenci respectfully reminded the emperor of his promise relative to the duchy of Milan, and requested him to appoint a given time for its fulfilment; upon which Charles with some bitterness replied, that all the courtesy displayed towards him by his royal brother had been counterbalanced by the perpetual annoyance to which he had been subjected upon that question; and that he was at the moment so engrossed by the affairs of Ghent, that he could not afford time for the consideration of any other and less pressing interest.

As the connétable, however, persisted in urging him to a decision, he at length declared that he should refer the matter to his council, as he did not feel himself justified in alienating so important a portion of his empire without previously obtaining the sanction of his brother the King of the Romans; but that he should no sooner have done so than he would be careful to make such an arrangement as could not fail to prove agreeable to the French monarch.

With this equivocal assurance Montmorenci was compelled to content himself; and having taken his final leave of the imperial dissembler, he returned to court with the two princes. The emperor meanwhile proceeded to Ghent, where he succeeded in a few days in suppressing the revolt, by an exhibition of severity which effectually terrified the rebels into submission; and this was no sooner accomplished than the Bishop of Lavaur

again demanded the promised investiture on the part of his sovereign; when Charles, who had secured his own safety, and who had no longer anything to fear from the enmity of his late lavish host, unblushingly asserted that he had given no pledge, and had no intention of making so serious a sacrifice.

This shameless tergiversation of the emperor produced the most baneful effects upon the moral nature of Francis I. Hitherto, amid all his faults, he had been unsuspicious of those about him, and frank and open-hearted to all in whom he believed that he could confide; but the deceit practised by Charles was so monstrous, and his ingratitude so glaring, that he lost confidence even in his best and truest friends; and eagerly listened to all the whispers which were circulated against those in whom he had hitherto reposed the greatest trust.

The first victim of this morbid feeling was the Maréchal de Brion Chabot, the playmate of his boyhood, the companion of his youth, and moreover the near relative of Madame d'Etampes, who, incensed by the coldness of Montmorenci, exerted all her influence to undermine his interests with the king, and to second those of her cousin. For a considerable time Francis had confided the direction of public affairs to the connétable, whose power had become so notorious, that with the exception of the monarch himself, and the Cardinal de Lorraine, all who were in correspondence with him addressed him by the title of *Monseigneur*. Between the cardinal and Montmorenci an aversion had long existed which was no secret to the court; and it was, consequently, without any suspicion of their new alliance, that they recon-

ciled their differences in order to meet a common danger, when they discovered the energy displayed by Madame d'Etampes in the cause of Chabot.

In the life of a public man it is always easy to discover some foundation for blame. Human nature is ever fallible; and where great power has been entrusted to an individual, it is rare indeed to find that it has never been abused. Nevertheless, Chabot felt so convinced of his own general uprightness, that when he became aware that through the machinations of some unexpected enemy he was accused of having mal-administered the affairs of the king in Piedmont, he merely smiled at what he considered as an abortive attempt to injure him.

Such, however, it was not destined to prove; for he had not only excited the indignation of Montmorenci by his ostentatious display of the wealth and power for which he was indebted to the partiality of the monarch, but he had also aroused the jealousy of Francis himself by the extreme interest which Madame d'Etampes undisguisedly evinced in his advancement, and wounded his vanity by presuming upon a familiarity which had commenced in their boyhood, and which no after events had diminished in the manner of the presumptuous favourite.

The train thus laid, it was easy for the king to discover an opportunity of offence; and, accordingly, when upon some trivial occasion, Chabot ventured as usual to dissent from his opinion, he turned sternly towards the astonished maréchal, declaring that he could no longer tolerate his insolence; and threatening that, should he persist in so unbecoming a course as that which he had thus arrogantly adopted, he would put him upon his trial.

Indignant at this menace, Chabot, instead of quailing before the displeasure of his royal master, which the latter had anticipated that he would do, answered in as high a tone, that his majesty was quite at liberty to arrest him upon the instant, should such be his pleasure, as he felt so secure that neither his life nor his honour could be touched, that he should feel no uneasiness regarding the result of the investigation.

This boldness, which appeared to Francis to be intended as an open defiance of the authority of which he was so jealous, at once decided the fate of the imprudent Chabot; who, with his usual impetuosity, had not paused to remember that the friendship of a sovereign cannot be enjoyed upon equal terms; and that it must always be received as a boon, rather than claimed as a right, whatever may have been the obligations incurred by that sovereign towards his subject.

It is, however, evident from the result, that the old affection of Francis for the maréchal was still too powerful to permit him to contemplate any ultimate injury to his favourite; and that all he sought was to humble his vanity, and to diminish his pretensions; but he, nevertheless, gave an order to the chancellor Poyet to appoint commissaries from the several parliaments of France, and to proceed at once to the trial. Chabot was arrested, imprisoned in the castle of Melun, and several times interrogated by the chancellor himself, who presided over the proceedings contrary to all precedent, as his jurisdiction did not extend to the criminal courts. But Poyet, who was at this period the creature of the king as blindly and unscrupulously as he had formerly been that of Louise

de Savoie, boldly set all legal conventionalities at defiance; and pursued his undertaking with such overweening zeal, that he ere long announced to Francis that he had convicted the maréchal of no less than five-and-twenty crimes, any one of which merited the pain of death.

Such had not, however, been the opinion of the commissaries; who, upon acquainting themselves with the extreme puerility of the several accusations, declared that they saw nothing in the conduct of the prisoner which could subject him to any penalty beyond that of a brief imprisonment; but, believing that Francis wished to rid himself of an importunate courtier of whom he had become weary, Poyet no sooner found that the other members of the court disregarded alike his arguments and his expostulations, than he proceeded to threats, which proved more efficacious; and thus sentence of death was ultimately signed against the unfortunate noble by his venal and profligate judges.

This result was, however, no sooner communicated to the king, than he expressed his indignation at the absurdity of which both the chancellor and his subordinates had been guilty, in thus condemning a man to die for errors not one of which amounted to a crime; and having so done, he desired that the maréchal might immediately be summoned to his presence. As Chabot entered the apartment, already aware of the decision of the court, he met the eye of the king respectfully but firmly, and having made a deep obeisance, stood silently before him awaiting the event.

"You see, Sir;" commenced Francis sternly; "to what a pass your arrogance has brought you; and that

it ill became you to challenge your sovereign to so dangerous a proof as he has now given you of his power."

"I admit my error, Sire;" said the maréchal; "but at least your judges have been unable to convict me of any want of zeal or fidelity in your service."

"Do you then still consider yourself irreproachable?" asked the monarch hastily.

"By no means, Sire;" was the calm and pointed reply; "I have learnt in my prison that before God and his sovereign no man can call himself innocent."

"It is well, Sir, that you have been awakened to a sense of your indiscretion;" said the king, but less sternly than before; "we will, however, spare your life. Whatever may have been your faults, you have ere now done us good service which we care not to forget. Let the remembrance of the latter cheer your exile, as that of the former cannot fail to sadden it."

The maréchal attempted no remonstrance; and a sentence of perpetual banishment was recorded against him, to which was superadded a fine of a hundred and fifty thousand livres; but, believing that he had now sufficiently humbled the vanity of his old and faithful servant, whose presumption had been fostered by the extreme familiarity to which he had been admitted by himself; wearied by the remonstrances of Madame d'Etampes; and aroused once more to his old jealousy of the connétable by her representations, Francis had no sooner thus cruelly suffered his victim to experience all the bitterness of anticipated ruin and disgrace, than he once more set aside the decree of the court, and restored him unrestrictedly to his former property and honours.

The vanity of the sovereign had, however, miscalculated the character of the subject. Chabot was a man of quick and sensitive feelings, and he had been wounded to the very core. The pardon which had been granted to him as a boon, failed to satisfy his self-respect; and he accordingly declined to resume his official functions until he had undergone a second trial before the regular tribunal; a favour which was at length reluctantly accorded to him. The result of this second investigation was an unqualified acquittal; and it was no sooner promulgated than he returned to court, where he was welcomed by no one more warmly than by Marguerite of Navarre; who, aware that Montmorenci had been the original instigator of his disgrace, and remembering only too keenly the insult which he had offered to herself on the subject of her religious tenets, hastened to assure him of her lively satisfaction at the triumph which he had obtained over his enemies; a triumph in which she was ere long destined to share.

To the maréchal it was, however, of small avail; for the mortification to which he had been exposed, and the anxiety that he had suffered during his imprisonment, had acted so injuriously upon his health that he never recovered from their effects; and in little more than a year Francis was deprived by death of one of the most attached and devoted of his subjects.

The next arrest which took place was that of his persecutor Poyet; who, although his disgrace was well merited, nevertheless owed it less to his crimes than to the vengeance of Madame d'Etampes, and the wounded dignity of Marguerite de Navarre.

Jean de Bary la Renaudie, a gentleman of Perigord, was engaged in a law-suit against M. du Tillet, the registrat-civil of the parliament of Paris, which had already extended over several years; and being anxious to see it terminated, he had applied for letters of evocation which the chancellor upon sundry pretexts refused to sign, although he had been expressly urged to do so by the favourite; who at length, irritated by his opposition, obtained an order from the king by which he was compelled to immediate obedience. It chanced that when this order arrived he was closeted with the Queen of Navarre, who was soliciting his interest in favour of an individual of her family who had recently been convicted of eloping with an heiress; and he had no sooner run his eye over the missive of the king, than taking up the letters of La Renaudie, he held them towards his royal petitioner, exclaiming bitterly:—

"There, Madame, is a proof of the purposes to which the ladies of the court apply their influence. Not satisfied with confining themselves to their legitimate sphere of action, they undertake even to violate the laws, and to give lessons to the most experienced magistrates."

The sister of the king, who apprehended that this taunt, which there can be little doubt simply applied to Madame d'Etampes, was intended as an insult to herself, immediately rose, refusing to resume with the minister the subject upon which she had been induced to visit him; and she had no sooner reached the palace than she hastened to communicate to the favourite the insolence of the fated Poyet.

On the 2d of August the French chancellor was a prisoner in the Bastille, where he remained until the conclusion of his trial on the 23d of April, 1545, which had been constantly prolonged by the charges that poured in against him from all directions. Found guilty of malversation, peculation, and legal corruption, he was sentenced "to be deprived of the dignity of chancellor, declared incapable of holding office under the crown, and condemned to a fine of a hundred thousand livres, as well as five years' imprisonment in whatsoever fortress the king might see fit to select." He was then removed to the town of Bourges, where he was detained until he had surrendered the whole of his property in payment of the fine; and he ultimately died in Paris in a state of the most squalid poverty, without a home or a friend.

Despite the unworthy requital which had been made by Charles V. to the impolitic hospitality of the French king, he was anxious to avoid an open rupture between the two countries; and after his return to Spain he accordingly hastened to propose to Francis a double alliance between their families which might ensure their lasting friendship, and by such means invest them with a supremacy over the whole of Europe. For this purpose he declared his readiness to accept for his son Dom Philippe, the hand of Jeanne d'Albret, the daughter of Henry of Navarre and Marguerite, the king's sister; pledging himself to permit Francis to redeem the principalities of Bearn and Lower Navarre, both of which were situate within the French territories, for two millions of livres; and to give his own daughter, the Princess of Spain, in

marriage to Charles, Duke d'Orleans, with either the duchy of Milan, or the Low Countries and the counties of Burgundy and Charolois, as her dower, on condition that the king should increase the appanage of his son.

To this proposition Francis, however, refused to accede, although a more brilliant alliance could not have presented itself for the young prince. He declared in reply, that he could not consent to receive the duchy of Milan as the dowry of the Princess of Spain, inasmuch as such a concession would tend to invalidate his just claims to that sovereignty, to which he considered that he had an undisputed right, either in his own person or in that of one of his sons; while he was equally indisposed to accept the Low Countries and the provinces specified on the condition assigned, that should the prince die before his wife these territories were to revert to the emperor himself; while he moreover declined to give any definite reply as to the marriage of Jeanne d'Albret with Dom Philippe.

Charles V, who had anticipated a very different result, was extremely chagrined by this unexpected obstacle. He declared that while Francis was exacting in his own demands, he avoided all personal sacrifice; but he, nevertheless, abstained from any demonstration of hostility, believing that upon mature deliberation the French king would accede to his proposals.

The policy of Francis upon this occasion, meanwhile caused severe disappointment to the King and Queen of Navarre, who saw their wildest dreams of ambition realized in the alliance proposed for their daughter; but the idea of an union between this princess and the son of the German emperor alarmed alike the king and his

ministers; who foresaw, should it be effected, the almost certain usurpation of the kingdom of Navarre by the Spaniards, as well as that of a considerable portion of territory at the base of the Pyrenees; and, consequently, not all the importunities of his much-loved sister could induce Francis to yield. Either, as he asserted, both the marriages must take place, or neither; adding, moreover, that nothing should induce him to dismember his kingdom in order to increase the territories of Charles V.

The negotiation was, however, continued, but listlessly and indifferently, until the arrival in France of the Duke de Cleves and Juliers,[1] who having been disappointed in his hope of obtaining the duchy of Gueldres (to which both Antoine de Lorraine and himself laid claim as the near relatives of the deceased Duke William,) at the hands of Charles V, who was anxious to retain its sovereignty and to merge it in that of the Low Countries; at once proceeded to the court of Francis to solicit his assistance and protection. It happened, unfortunately for the interests of the young princess, that a short time previously the Cardinal de Grammont, Archbishop of Bordeaux and Lieutenant-Governor of Guienne, had succeeded in intercepting a secret correspondence between the

[1] Guillaume de la Mark succeeded his father, Jean III, in the duchies of Cleves, Berg, and Juliers. On the 27th of January, 1538, he was also summoned by the States of Gueldres and Zutphen, then assembled at Nimeguen, to inherit the sovereignty of their aged duke, Charles d'Egmont, who was at that period seventy-one years of age, and childless; and who died on the 30th of June following. An old and close friendship united the two families; and the Gueldrians refused to recognise a treaty into which their duke had been compelled to enter, and by virtue of which his duchy passed, upon his death, into the house of Austria.

emperor and the King of Navarre on the subject of the proposed marriage of their children; and this letter having been forwarded to the king, he became so incensed by this daring opposition to his will, that he forthwith offered to the Duke of Cleves, as an earnest of his friendship, the hand of his niece; an offer which was gratefully accepted. In vain did Henri de Navarre remonstrate, and his sister weep; Francis remained immovable, declaring that he would not retract a pledge voluntarily given; and despite the opposition of both parents, he accordingly made known to the duke that his marriage would be solemnized at Châtellerault on the 15th of July.

On that day the ceremony accordingly took place with a magnificence which excited much murmuring among the people, upon whom a new tax was levied in order to liquidate the outlay consequent upon this demand on the treasury; and the only consolation experienced by the disappointed mother was afforded by the fact, that as the poor child, who had only just attained her eleventh year, was so overloaded with jewels, and gold and silver damask, that she had not strength to walk under their weight, the king commanded Montmorenci to take her in his arms, and carry her to the altar; an order which startled the whole court, such an office being derogatory to the exalted rank of the connétable, and obviously intended as an affront.

Montmorenci, however, obeyed in silence; but as he lifted the little princess, who was clinging to the side of her mother, his cheek flushed upon hearing Marguerite remark scornfully to Madame d'Etampes: "Is it not

amusing? Here is the man who would fain have ruined me in the good graces of my royal brother, now playing the part of lacquey to my daughter." A taunt which had no sooner reached his ear, than he in turn exclaimed to one of his friends: "My season of favour is over, and I bid it farewell for ever."

The event proved the justice of his previsions, for at the close of the banquet it was announced to him that the king authorized his retirement to one of his estates, and would dispense with all leave-taking.

The next morning the once-powerful connétable was on his way to his château at Chantilly.

The positive cause of his disgrace was never publicly ascertained. Many ascribed it to the evil counsels by which Francis was induced to allow the emperor a free passage through his kingdom, an act of impolicy which he had since repented; and others, to the jealousy felt by the king at the excessive attachment existing between him and the dauphin; but its undoubted motive was revealed by the fact, that while that prince was on one occasion repeating his entreaties for the recall of his first tutor in arms, the king exclaimed bitterly: "No more of this, Sir. Never again mention to me the name of that dispenser of 'Good-morrows!'"

The Duchess d'Etampes was revenged. No one thenceforward dared to plead the cause of the outraged connétable; and his enforced exile terminated only with the death of the ungenerous monarch who had so ill requited his brilliant services.

The departure of Montmorenci was no impediment to the gaiety of the court; which, on the occasion of the

marriage of Mademoiselle de Navarre, drank deep of every species of dissipation. Superb banquets, and magnificent tournaments, daily took place; and at the latter a number of knights-errant presented themselves in the lists, who rigorously observed all the traditional ceremonies of the Knights of the Round Table. The most costly gifts were showered upon the bride; and at the conclusion of the festivities, the Duke de Cleves took his leave of the royal circle, and returned to Aix-la-Chapelle, whither his young wife was to follow him when she should have attained her fourteenth year. This arrangement, however, was never completed; as Marguerite and her husband, against whose consent the alliance had taken place, caused it to be annulled a short time afterwards; nor was the princess finally married until the year 1548, when she became the wife of Antoine de Bourbon, Duke de Vendôme, who succeeded his father-in-law as King of Navarre.

From Châtellerault Francis removed with his court to the capital, where an incident occurred which occasioned considerable amusement to the idle and licentious circle. The monarch, soon wearied by the gloomy palace of the Tournelles, proceeded with a few chosen courtiers to the château of Madrid; an arrangement which afforded great satisfaction to the favourite, who, whatever contempt she affected to feel for the forsaken queen, evinced on all occasions the utmost anxiety to escape from her vicinity. The royal party had no sooner arrived at the villa, than the king commanded a grand hunt in the Bois de Boulogne; from which, however, the duchess, being slightly indisposed, absented herself. It is true that the

gallant and handsome Christian de Nançay, the captain of the body-guard, had been prevented by his duties from joining in the sport; and it was well known that Madame d'Etampes had long ceased to conceal her passion for this noble young soldier. Suffice it, that while she sat musing in her own apartment, De Nançay, leaning from the balcony of the outer gallery, was watching the shades of evening as they thickened, in as deep a reverie as her own.

At length the great clock of the château struck seven; and De Nançay, starting from his waking dream, adjusted his helmet and coat-of-mail, and hastened to his post to arrange his pikemen; after which he returned to the gallery, whence he proceeded to the private apartments; and having traversed the arched corridor by which they were approached, suddenly stopped before a hanging curtain of blue silk, richly fringed with gold, and embroidered all over with the royal salamander in the same costly bullion. A deep flush rose to his cheek, and for a moment his eyes fell before the significant device; but he was young, bold, and fully conscious of his personal advantages. It was not, consequently, from any dread of personal danger that he paused; but only one short year had elapsed since he had been a personal attendant of the sovereign, who, in requital of his services, had permitted him to exchange the plumed cap and embroidered pourpoint of the page for the helm and halberd of the soldier; and he was conscious that, by his meditated intrusion, he was about to violate the respect which he owed to his royal master.

Behind that mystic curtain was an apartment into which no one had a right to penetrate, save the king himself—the apartment of the Duchess d'Etampes; who, dear as she might be to the monarch, the enthusiastic youth believed could be loved by no one so devotedly as by himself. As we have said, he paused for a moment; but as he apprehended no severity on the part of the fair favourite herself, he soon forgot all save his mad and ungovernable passion. With a desperate clutch he drew back the folds of the frail barrier, and cautiously entered the forbidden chamber.

The room was of small dimensions, oval-shaped, and imperfectly lighted by the faint flame which was confined within a lamp of ground glass, placed upon a precious secretaire of ebony, inlaid with sandal-wood, ivory, and coral; rich hangings of purple damask veiled the walls, and were looped back at intervals by hands wrought in polished steel; a noble Venetian mirror faced the portal; and a gorgeous sofa, upon which were scattered cushions of gold-coloured satin, tasselled with pearls, stood immediately beneath it. Two of the velvet-covered coffers, which were at that period the ungraceful and inconvenient substitutes for chairs, were placed near it; while the only window by which the daylight was admitted into the apartment was flung open, its draperies drawn aside, and its space partially occupied by the slight figure of a woman, whose head was bowed over her bosom, and whose hands rested upon the sill.

The breath of De Nançay came thick and fast, as he stood with his eyes riveted upon the dimly-traced out-

line of the solitary muser; he could neither speak, nor move a limb; he felt like one who is deprived of all power of volition. How long this trance might have continued, is uncertain, had not Madame d'Etampes suddenly started, swept back her dishevelled hair, and, moving from the window, approached a table on which lay the miniature rattle destined to summon her attendants; when, as she reached the centre of the floor, the rays of the lamp, feeble though they were, glinted over the armour of the intruder, upon which she uttered a faint scream, and sank fainting on the sofa.

"It is only I—Christian—most adored of women;" murmured De Nançay, as he hastened to reassure her; "It is only I, your worshipper. Will you not pardon me?"

"You mad boy!" gasped out the terrified favourite; "do you seek your own destruction?"

"What could I do, Anne?" urged the impassioned youth. "I knew that you were here—here, and alone."

"But the king ——"

"The king!" echoed De Nançay petulantly; "Can you not forget him at such a moment as this? He is still in the forest. The stag has afforded him right royal sport, and he cannot return hither for hours."

"Nevertheless, you have acted with great imprudence;" said the duchess tenderly, as she wreathed her slender fingers in his clustering curls; "you may have been suspected—even seen."

"I thought only of you, sweet Anne."

"I dare not trust you. You will involve both yourself and me."

"Spare your reproaches;" said Christian impatiently; "for I have exercised more discretion than you seem willing to believe. The king, I repeat, cannot be here for two happy, blissful hours."

"From whom did you ascertain that fact?"

"From the Count de Saint-Pol, who has this moment returned from the hunt."

"Enough;" said the duchess with a smile; "the boy is, I see, fast ripening into the man, and must not be idly chidden." Then, springing her small rattle, a summons which was instantly answered by the entrance of one of her women, she made a significant gesture, and the attendant departed as silently as she had appeared.

Scarcely had half an hour elapsed when a great noise was heard in the court-yard. The archers and pikemen flew to their arms; and the *suivante*, who had slumbered upon her watch, rushed into the apartment exclaiming hurriedly: "Madame, you have not a moment to lose. His majesty has returned."

In an instant both the duchess and De Nançay sprang to their feet; the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the baying of hounds, became every instant more audible. There was no longer time either for concealment or for flight, and moreover the captain of the royal guard was absent from his post. Meanwhile the king had sprung from his horse; and booted, spurred, and muddy as he was, had hurriedly entered the château, and ascended by a private staircase which led immediately to the apartments of the duchess, in order to allay her uneasiness by assuring her of his safety.

Already the clanking of his spurs echoed sharply through the arched gallery. The duchess had recognised his footstep, and the young guard had resigned himself to his fate. The silken curtain of the portal was flung back, and in another instant Francis appeared upon the threshold of the apartment, preceded by two pages bearing flambeaux. On discovering De Nançay in the saloon of Madame d'Etampes, the king suddenly stopped short, and his eyes flashed with rage; but he nevertheless maintained sufficient control over his feelings to suppress his indignation. Christian stood, with bowed head, in the centre of the floor, and beside him knelt a female, whose face was buried in her hands, and whose whole frame quivered with emotion.

"You here, Sir!" said Francis sternly.

Christian replied only by a respectful bow.

"And apparently in good company;" pursued the king bitterly: "Who is this woman? Let her stand up."

The recumbent figure slowly rose from her Magdalen-like attitude.

"You are indeed over-bold, young Sir;" thundered the indignant monarch; "would no light-o'-love serve your turn save one of the attendants of the Duchess d'Etampes? and no place of rendezvous suffice except her private chamber? Hola! guards! seize your prisoner."

De Nançay respectfully drew his sword from its scabbard, and in silence laid it at the feet of his irritated master; after which, with a profound obeisance, he surrendered himself to the royal archers who awaited him at the entrance of the apartment.

About a month subsequently, Francis summoned the delinquent to his presence. "M. de Nançay," he said; "I have been induced to pardon the crime of which you were lately guilty, at the powerful intercession of the noble lady to whom you offered so deep an insult that she might well have been excused had she rather solicited your lasting disgrace; but who, with a generosity for which you can never sufficiently prove your gratitude, condescends to overlook the outrage committed upon her dignity, and in consideration of your youth, freely forgives you. It is to her, and her alone, I repeat, that you owe your escape from a fate which, to a young and proud spirit like yours, would have been worse than death. Do not suffer the lesson you have now received to prove unprofitable. Return to your duty. Here is your sword, Sir; and endeavour to guard it better in time to come."

Christian knelt, and having dutifully kissed the knee of the sovereign, once more took possession of his forfeited weapon; pledging himself, upon the honour of a soldier, that he would never again be guilty of the enormity of pursuing with his addresses any of the attendants of the outraged favourite.

The clever duchess was saved. She had, indeed, sacrificed the fair fame of one of her women, but she had succeeded in securing her own immunity. And, after all, what was the value of character to the daughter of a citizen, or to an inmate of the court of Francis I.?

During the course of this year, that maddest of all mad geniuses, Benvenuto Cellini, was introduced to Francis by the Cardinal de Ferrara, where he soon drew

upon himself the enmity of the Duchess d'Etampes; and although he enriched the collection of the king by several of the finest specimens of his art, he was compelled, notwithstanding the partiality evinced towards him by Francis himself, to request permission to leave the country a short time afterwards, feeling unequal to cope with so dangerous an adversary.

The exile of Montmorenci from the court was speedily followed by that of the profligate Cardinal de Lorraine, who was accused of having accepted an annual revenue of six thousand crowns from the emperor, on the archbishopric of Saragossa; an equivocal meanness in which he was countenanced by several of his colleagues, but to which the king affected to attach a suspicion of treachery in his case, in order to escape from the continual importunities rendered necessary by the enormous outlay in which he indulged.

CHAPTER XVI.

[1541-42.]

CHANGED ASPECT OF THE FRENCH COURT—FAVOUR OF THE MARÉCHAL D'ANNEBAUT—THE EMPEROR INVESTS HIS OWN SON WITH THE DUCHY OF MILAN—THE VENETIANS THREATEN TO FORM AN ALLIANCE WITH SOLYMAN—CHARLES V. AND FRANCIS DESPATCH AMBASSADORS TO VENICE—THEY ARE COLDLY RECEIVED—MURDER OF FREGOSA AND RINCON—DU BELLAY-LANGEI ACCUSES THE IMPERIALISTS OF THE CRIME—THE ASSASSINS ARE PUT TO DEATH BY THE STATES OF VENICE—FRANCIS SUMMONS THE EMPEROR TO MAKE REPARATION—CONTEMPTUOUS REPLY OF CHARLES V.—FRANCIS ARRESTS THE ARCHBISHOP OF VALENCE—CHARLES ENTERS INTO A TRUCE WITH THE PROTESTANT PRINCES—BENDA TAKEN BY THE TURKS—CHARLES V. CONDUCTS AN EXPEDITION AGAINST THE ALGERINES—HIS FLEET IS DISPERSED BY A TEMPEST—THE IMPERIALISTS RETURN TO SPAIN—FRANCIS RESOLVES TO DECLARE WAR AGAINST THE EMPEROR—THE FRENCH ARMIES OPEN THEIR CAMPAIGN—THE MARÉCHAL DE GUELDRES ATTACKS THE FLEMISH FRONTIERS—ALARM OF THE DOWAGER-QUEEN OF HUNGARY—TREACHERY OF THE DUCHESS D'ETAMPES—D'ANNEBAUT SECONDS HER VIEWS—SUSPICION OF THE KING—THE DUKE D'ORLEANS TAKES LUXEMBOURG—D'ANNEBAUT SUPERCEDES LANGEI IN HIS COMMAND IN PIEDMONT—DEATH OF LANGEI—D'ANNEBAUT IS APPOINTED ADMIRAL OF FRANCE—EXILE OF MONTPEZAT—GROWING ENMITY OF THE TWO PRINCES—FEMALE POLICY—THE COURT OF CATHERINE DE' MEDICI—THE "LIGHT BRIGADE"—REVOLT OF LA ROCHELLE—FRANCIS PROCEEDS THITHER, SUPPRESSES THE INSURRECTION, AND PARDONS THE CITIZENS.

CHAPTER XVI

[1541-42.]

The exile of Montmorenci and M. de Lorraine, and the death of de Brion-Chabot, had meanwhile changed the whole aspect of the French court. The connétable had no sooner retired to Chantilly than Francis transferred to the Maréchal d'Annebaut all the confidence which he had formerly bestowed upon his old favourite; but it was not long ere he was destined to feel his error, for the moment in which he had deprived himself of his two most zealous and devoted friends was pregnant with menace, and the nation could ill afford to sustain so serious a loss.

The emperor, after having awaited for some months a renewal of the negotiations into which he had entered with the French king, was no sooner apprised that a marriage was about to take place between the Duke de Cleves and Jeanne d'Albret, whose hand he had demanded for his own son, than, feeling the futility of anticipating any satisfactory result to his propositions, on the 11th of October, 1540, he had at Brussels invested Dom Philippe with the duchy of Milan; and

this important step once taken, his next care was to promote a rupture between the courts of Paris and Constantinople; and at the same time to excite the suspicions of the Christian princes as to the good faith of Francis.

The sultan was already prepared to view the policy of the French king with a jealous eye; first from his having failed him in Piedmont, and still more recently from the fact of his having suffered the passage of Charles V. through his dominions; while the Venetians, conscious that they had narrowly escaped destruction, and convinced by experience that they had more to fear from the enmity of the Infidels than they had to hope from the support of the emperor, had determined to effect an alliance with Solyman. This was a catastrophe which had not been foreseen by Charles V; and one so formidable that all his measures were at once arrested by the necessity of maintaining the semblance of a perfect amity with the French king. In order to accomplish so desirable an object, he therefore at once wrote to request of Francis that he would permit the Maréchal d'Annebaut to proceed to Venice in the company of the Marquis del Guasto, to assure the States that their apprehensions were unfounded, and to endeavour to include them in their league against the Infidels. His request was immediately complied with, but the Venetians had been so frequently deceived by statements of the same nature, that they received the envoys very coldly, declaring that no real friendship could exist between their several sovereigns until the Milanese were ceded to France; an event which had now become more improbable than ever.

Del Guasto argued and remonstrated in vain; the States civilly declined to declare themselves convinced; and it was not long ere they concluded a truce with the Ottomans, which was subsequently ratified by a treaty of peace.

This open demonstration of contempt on the part of the Venetians aroused the indignation of Francis; who, not without cause, attributed the affront to which he had thus been subjected, to the double-dealing of the emperor; and he at once resolved to justify himself in the opinion both of the sultan and the states of Venice, by imparting to them without reserve a detail of all that had taken place between himself and Charles V. For this purpose, he despatched as his ambassadors to the council of Venice a gallant officer named Cæsar Fregosa, a knight of the order of St. Michael, who had done him good service in Piedmont; and Antoine Rincon, one of the gentlemen of his bed-chamber, who was invested with the like dignity, and instructed to proceed to Constantinople by the same route, and, consequently, to accompany his colleague to his allotted post. Rincon, however, having some private business to arrange at Lyons, first visited that city, where he was detained for a short time; while Fregosa advanced as far as Suza, to inspect a troop of gensdarmes of which the command had recently been confided to him. Du Bellay-Langei, who had been appointed lieutenant-general in Piedmont after the death of Chabot, was at that period residing at Turin; and the delay of the two ambassadors afforded him an opportunity of discovering a treacherous plot which had been laid by the Marquis del Guasto for their destruction.

The extreme corpulency of Rincon rendering him unable to attempt the exertion of riding, it had been decided that the envoys and their suite should avail themselves of the barges upon the Pô, which, by virtue of the then existing truce, was considered to be an equally safe and convenient method of performing the journey. Del Guasto had, however, no sooner ascertained this arrangement, than, disregarding the sacredness of the pledge given by his imperial master, he hired assassins, who were stationed at different points along the river, for the purpose of intercepting their progress, and possessing themselves of their despatches, with strict orders to secure them at all hazards, even should the lives of the envoys be sacrificed in the struggle, or their destruction rendered necessary to ensure the secresy of their mission.

On the 1st of July the two ambassadors reached Rivoli, where they were met by the vigilant Langei, who strongly urged them to abandon the river, and at any sacrifice to pursue a different route; but Rincon, who, as we have stated, could ill brook the saddle, and who had, moreover, been long accustomed to travel in uncivilized countries, disregarded the advice, declaring that, whatever might be the determination of his companion, he should himself proceed by water; nor was it without extreme difficulty that Du Bellay finally induced him to entrust his despatches to his own care, pledging himself for their safe delivery in Venice. Fregosa, who had not the same reasons for exposing himself to gratuitous danger, hesitated for a time as to which measure he should adopt; but he soon permitted himself to be won

over by the confident assurances of his colleague; and, despite the persevering expostulations of the more prudent Langei, the ill-fated envoys left the city at twilight, on the 2d of July, in two swift boats, each pulling eight oars.

At midday on the morrow, when they were within three miles of the mouth of the Ticino, and about the same distance from Pavia, they were suddenly attacked by a couple of barges full of armed men, who immediately cut off all communication between the two boats; and they had no sooner boarded that containing the ambassadors, than a desperate encounter took place, in which both Fregosa and Rincon lost their lives; when their rowers were immediately secured, and conveyed to the dungeons of Pavia.

Meanwhile the boat which conveyed their attendants, forgotten for the instant by the miscreants who were intent upon their principal prey, was enabled to reach the opposite bank, where all its occupants sprang to land, and escaped into the forest; whence they made their way to the quarters of Du Bellay, and gave him a detailed account of the frightful catastrophe. With his usual caution, however, that able general, until he could succeed in securing the most irrefragable proofs of the delinquency of Del Guasto, forbore all complaint; and even compelled himself to receive with civility the affected condolences of the marquis, and to appear to give credit to his assurances that the crime had been committed by brigands; but he had no sooner possessed himself of sufficient evidence of the guilt of the imperialist assassin, than he formally accused Del Guasto of the outrage

which had been offered to his sovereign in the persons of his accredited ambassadors, and challenged him to prove his innocence.

This was, however, impossible, as Langei, resolved to leave no method unattempted to unmask the whole conspiracy, upon learning from the fugitives that the rowers of the captured boat had been made prisoners and conveyed to Pavia, soon found means to bribe a servant of the governor of that citadel, who secretly provided the boatmen with files, by which they were enabled to effect their escape; and from whom he obtained all the information which he could desire.

The reply of Del Guasto to this overt accusation was the puerile expedient of challenging his accuser, the overwhelming proofs of his guilt possessed by Du Bellay depriving him of all means of self-justification; while the Republic of Venice, indignant that so base a murder should have been committed within their territories, pursued the assassins, and succeeded in arresting several of their number, all of whom were recognised to be in the pay of the marquis; but, although they were publicly tried and executed, Del Guasto, in order to complete his work of treachery, suffered them to undergo their sentence without the slightest effort at interference; simply protesting that, if they were justly condemned, they had acted upon their own responsibility, and without his knowledge.

This investigation was no sooner terminated than Du Bellay drew up in duplicate a detailed statement of the whole occurrence, one copy of which he forwarded to the emperor, and the other to the diet of the German

States which was shortly afterwards assembled at Ratisbon; and ere long all the princes of Christendom were informed of the atrocious deed which had been perpetrated, in violation of the recognised rights which are held sacred by all civilized nations.

Great was the indignation expressed by the respective sovereigns, who thus saw the very foundations of their safety shaken; but it was still feeble beside that of Francis, who at once summoned the emperor to make reparation for the affront which had been offered to him; and reminded him that this was not the first occasion upon which he had been called upon to suffer from the treachery of his assassins. Charles, however, replied to this demand only by recriminations; alleging that if, instead of pursuing a correspondence with Solyman, Francis had, like himself, been preparing for a new crusade against the infidels, his envoys would not have fallen victims to his crooked policy; or, as he himself believed, to the cupidity of a horde of robbers. Although he could not mistake the meaning of the French king, he abstained from any allusion to Montecuculli, or to the murder of Maraviglia, as if in disdain of accusations so vague and monstrous; and thus the outraged monarch found himself compelled to adopt more stringent measures in order to secure his vengeance.

Charles V. was, effectively, at that precise moment raising a powerful fleet to operate against the African corsairs; his previous successes against the infidels having roused his ambition to maintain the distinction which he had already won, and to be regarded as the champion of Christendom; a title of which, moreover,

he was aware that Francis was more jealous than of any other he had acquired.

The opportunity of reprisals so ardently desired by the French king was not long in presenting itself. George of Austria, Archbishop of Valence, the natural son of the emperor, who was on his way from Spain to Belgium, having halted at Lyons, Francis caused him to be arrested, declaring that he would retain him as a hostage until Fregosa and Rincon, if still living, were restored to him in safety; or in the event of this being impossible, that their murderers should be consigned to an ignominious death; a mode of revenge which, puerile as it appeared, was far from being so in fact, the extreme partiality of the emperor for this prelate being matter of notoriety. A short time subsequently, moreover, Francis having ascertained that Charles V. and the pope were to have an interview at Lucca before the embarkation of the former for Algiers, he desired his ambassador to attend the conference; and to demand once more, in his name, the restoration of his murdered envoys, or the condign punishment of their assassins.

This demonstration was, however, met as coldly as the last, Charles being well aware that a considerable period must elapse ere the king could proceed, with any chance of success, to aggressive measures; and it was in consequence of this conviction that he persisted in disregarding the expostulations of the pontiff, who earnestly represented that he would better consult the safety of Christendom by remaining to guard the frontiers of Italy against Solyman, (by whom his brother Ferdinand had recently been vanquished before Buda, and com-

pelled to abandon that city,) than by any distant expedition, however important.

The arguments of His Holiness availed nothing; the emperor feeling convinced that he must at once set sail, or altogether abandon his darling project; as, should he afford Francis sufficient time to assemble an army, he would inevitably avail himself of the opportunity of his absence to possess himself of the Milanese. He therefore continued to hasten his preparations; having already at the diet at Ratisbon accorded to the Protestant princes, whose friendship he was anxious to secure during his foreign campaign, an *interregnum* or truce, by which they were authorized to retain the free exercise of their religion until the decision of the general council; while, in requital of this concession, the Diet consented to supply him with a large body of troops to assist against the Turks; declared the Duke de Cleves the enemy of the empire; engaged to co-operate in the reinstatement of the Duke of Savoy in his sovereignty; and prohibited all subjects of the empire from serving in the armies of France.

Although the original intention of the emperor had been to proceed at once to the coast of Africa, it was anticipated that the defeat of his brother would induce him to commence his campaign by an attack upon Soliman; but, contrary to all expectations, he persisted in his original project, although the close of autumn having arrived, the season was most unpropitious to such an enterprise. Accordingly, on the 18th of October, he set sail from Majorca with twenty thousand infantry and two thousand horse, the *élite* of his combined armies.

On the following day a severe storm scattered his vessels, and exposed the troops to severe suffering from the crowded state of the ships; but on the 20th the imperial fleet was enabled with considerable difficulty, owing to the continuance of the hurricane, to cast anchor between the city of Algiers and the river of El Harach, where the disembarkation took place. The soldiery effected their landing in safety; but before the bulk of their ammunition and provisions could be secured, the tempest became once more so violent that fifteen vessels of war, a hundred and forty transports, and eight thousand seamen, were swallowed by the waves; while at the same time an immense water-spout burst over the camp, which caused a great sacrifice of life; and thus the elements within five days revenged Barbarossa for his former defeat.

Andrea Doria, with the wreck of the gallant fleet which had so recently excited such brilliant hopes, had taken refuge behind Cape Métafuz; and he was fortunate enough to be enabled within a few hours to apprise the emperor, whose situation was at that moment desperate, of his safety. The small quantity of powder which had been landed was utterly destroyed by the water, and a considerable number of the troops were drowned; while the remainder, utterly without food of any description, and harassed by the Algerine horsemen, had scarcely sufficient strength left to make their way to the ships, although the distance did not exceed four leagues; but at length, on the 31st of October, they once more found themselves on board, although no longer in a condition to molest the Infidels. Nor were they more fortunate in

their exodus than in their advent; for the tempest, still unsated with its prey, pursued the fleet so relentlessly, that it was once more dispersed; nor was it until the 3d of December that the emperor arrived at Carthagena storm-tossed and alone, each of the vessels which were fortunate enough to survive the passage having made a different port.

Great was the terror which the knowledge of this calamity spread over Europe. The Turks were now masters of Hungary, and were threatening Vienna; the whole coast of the Mediterranean was defenceless; the triple army of Charles destroyed; and all Christendom exposed to the power of the conquering Solyman. In France alone was a secret *Te Deum* raised, for her most dreaded enemy was laid low; and Francis resolved no longer to postpone a war which he justified by pretexting the non-fulfilment of his demand for vengeance on the murderers of his two ambassadors.

Some of the more cautious of his councillors suggested the expediency of delay until he should have completed the fortification of his frontiers, and terminated the treaties into which he had entered; but he merely referred them to the ruined condition of the emperor's army, and refused to listen to their representations. He was next advised to make an immediate descent upon Piedmont, an act which would in itself be equivalent to a formal declaration of war; and had he acted upon this suggestion he must speedily have made himself master of the whole of that province; but his desire to avoid the immense outlay necessary to maintain an army in Italy, determined him to commence his campaign by the

Low Countries, to which he had been urged by several of the German princes, who pledged themselves to support him in any act of aggression against Charles which might assist their own views. He was also anxious to secure the co-operation of the Duke of Cleves, of whom Charles had vowed the destruction; and he accordingly proceeded formally to declare hostilities against the emperor.

This was no sooner done than he divided his troops into five distinct bodies, in order simultaneously to attack the enemy on as many different points. The dauphin proceeded to Perpignan, with Antoine Desprez-Montpezat as his lieutenant; the Duke d'Orleans was despatched to Luxembourg, seconded by Claude, Duke de Guise;[1] a third division marched to Brabant, under the joint command of Nicholas de Bossu, Sire de Longueval, and of Martin Van Rossem,[2] Maréchal de Gueldres; a fourth, under Charles, Duke de Vendôme, was entrusted with the protection of the Flemish frontiers; and the fifth was marched into Piedmont by the

[1] Claude, Duke d'Aumale and de Guise, was the seventh son of Réné II, Duke de Lorraine.

[2] Martin von Rossem (or Roscheim) was one of the bravest generals of the Duke de Cleves, and acquitted himself with great distinction on several occasions. He defeated the Prince of Orange in the campaign of 1542, and compelled him to shut himself up in Antwerp, of which city he might have possessed himself had not his love of dissipation caused him to suffer the propitious moment to escape. When too late, he attempted to retrieve his error, but failed, although he destroyed half the faubourgs by fire. Dueren having been taken by assault, and the province of Gueldres reduced to submission by the emperor, the monarch restored both the duke and his valiant maréchal to his favour; and appointed the latter to a high command in his army. Von Rossem ultimately fell a victim to the plague at Antwerp, in 1555.

Maréchal d'Annebaut. The latter, however, having been compelled to remain inactive for the space of two months, was recalled to join the army under the dauphin, which ultimately amounted to forty-five thousand men, headed by the first nobility of France.

The Maréchal de Gueldres, who was a general of consummate skill and daring, and, moreover, utterly without scruple as regarded the means by which he carried out his measures, was anxious to follow the example of Seckingen, and to make the war pay its own expenses. He consequently no sooner found himself at the head of twelve thousand lansquenets and two thousand German horse, than he permitted his troops to indulge in every species of excess towards the inhabitants of the invaded provinces, while he nevertheless maintained the most rigorous discipline among themselves.

The Queen of Hungary, Governante of the Low Countries, terrified by the enormities committed on her frontiers, appealed to the Duke de Cleves to declare the nature of his intentions; but he contented himself by assuring her that the force of which she complained was not in his pay, nor was he responsible for its proceedings; although he imagined that it was composed of volunteers about to march against the Turks. She then addressed herself to Francis, who merely replied by telling her that his own intentions were pacific; and thus left to her own resources, she had the mortification of seeing Van Rossem advance to Liege, cross the Meuse, and ultimately compel the Prince of Orange to shut himself up in Antwerp, after a loss of fourteen hundred men and six standards.

The assemblage of a strong army in the south awakened all the ambition of Marguerite de Navarre, who entreated her brother to employ it in the recovery of her husband's kingdom; but he was dissuaded from the attempt by the Maréchal de Montpezat, and it was determined that the dauphin should at once proceed against Roussillon, while the emperor was concentrating his forces upon the Milanese.

This campaign was destined to complete the moral turpitude of the unprincipled favourite, who in her anxiety to ruin Diane de Poitiers through her lover, entered into a secret correspondence with the emperor, which tended to counteract all the endeavours of the dauphin. Her agent in this act of treachery was the Count de Bossut, of the house of Longueval, who at the commencement of the following reign narrowly escaped decapitation for his share in the nefarious transaction. This noble was one of the many lovers of the duchess, and was induced to requite her condescension by betraying the interests of his sovereign.

The two young princes were equally brave, and equally ambitious of renown; but the advantage was on the side of the elder, who, more prudent, more self-possessed, and less the victim of impulse than his brother, was far better calculated for the command of an army. Nevertheless, he was compelled to abandon the siege of Roussillon, the enemy having, through the agency of Madame d'Etampes, been apprised of his design upon the city, in time to strengthen it by throwing ten thousand troops into the citadel; while d'Annebaut, whom tradition boldly affirms to have been united to her by closer bonds than

those of mere friendship, was guilty of such extraordinary errors during the siege, as to draw down upon him the suspicions of all the other generals; and even to extort from the king himself the avowal that he was aware he had been betrayed, and that he did not attribute the failure to the dauphin personally, but to those by whom he had been misled, either through ignorance, or a jealousy of others who had succeeded better than themselves.

This allusion bore reference to the Duke d'Orleans, who had in succession taken Danvilliers, Yvry, Arlon, Montmedy, and even Luxembourg; although, from some motive which has remained unrevealed, he suddenly quitted the army, and rejoined the king his father at Montpellier; an imprudence of which the enemy immediately availed themselves to recover the two latter cities. The Duke de Guise, however, succeeded in once more possessing himself of Montmedy, but Luxembourg remained in the hands of the Imperialists.

The war in Roussillon was languidly pursued; Perpignan, which the Franch had trusted to find an easy conquest, from the imperfect state of its fortifications, still held out; and had been so strongly garrisoned by the emperor as to resist every effort of the French generals to take it by assault; while the appearance of dysentery among the troops, and the approach of winter compelled the dauphin to dissolve his camp and to abandon the siege of the city; upon which Francis despatched d'Annebaut to Piedmont, where Du Bellay-Langei had, with a very insufficient force, been employed in thwarting the operations of Del Guasto; not having it in his power, for want of troops, to adopt any more active

measures. To the mortification of the veteran commander in thus finding himself superseded in his command by a younger and less experienced general than himself, was superadded that of discovering that d'Annebaut, inflated by court favour, was little disposed to defer to his advice; and he consequently resolved immediately to withdraw from a position alike irksome to his feelings and perilous to his honour; and to make a personal communication to Francis, of such circumstances as he believed to be of importance to the interests of the kingdom.

Injured and wounded as he had been, Langei would not permit any selfish consideration to influence his sense of duty as a loyal subject; and accordingly he had no sooner made the requisite arrangements than he commenced his homeward journey; but the exertion proved too great for his infirm and war-worn constitution, and on reaching St. Saphorin, near the mountain of Tarare, he was seized with a sudden attack of gout in the stomach, which terminated his valuable existence on the 9th of January, 1543.[1]

Another pearl had fallen from the diadem of Francis I.

A wise counsellor, a brave soldier, an able scholar, and an honest man, Du Bellay-Langei was a noble illustration of the age; but his very virtues had operated

[1] M. de Langei was accompanied in his homeward journey by the celebrated Rabelais, who was at that period his physician; and to whom he bequeathed a pension of fifty annual livres "until his heirs should have provided for him, or that he should have acquired church preferment to the amount of a hundred Tournay livres a-year." It is believed that it was to this clause in the will of the Maréchal Du Bellay, that Rabelais was subsequently indebted for the cure of Meudon.

against his fortunes. His merit had been cheerfully and frequently admitted by the king, but his reward had been merely lip-deep. Charles V, however, did him nobler justice, by exclaiming when the intelligence of his death was communicated to him: "Is Langei dead? Then have I nothing more to apprehend from a man who has done me more mischief in his time than all the other subjects of France combined."

He was succeeded by his brother, Martin Du Bellay; who in his turn assumed the family name of Langei; and was promoted to the government of Turin on the departure of d'Annebaut; who during the winter repaired to France, to confer personally with the king upon the measures necessary to be pursued in the campaign of the following spring, leaving the command of the army to M. de Boutières.[1]

The sustained and even increased disgust which Francis exhibited towards the disgraced connétable, was destined to react in a favourable manner upon the maréchal d'Annebaut, who, a short time after his arrival at court, was appointed to the rank of admiral, vacant by

[1] M. de Boutières commenced his military career at the age of sixteen, as an archer in the company of Bayard at Padua, where he took a standard from the Imperialists, and made prisoner the captain by whom it had been carried; who, on being taunted with his surrender to a mere boy, declared that he had been overpowered by numbers, and did not consider himself as the captive of the lad who claimed his ransom; whereupon Boutières requested that the horse and arms of the prisoner might be restored to him, in order that they might decide the question single-handed; a proposal which was declined by his prisoner. He afterwards became the lieutenant of Bayard; and during the siege of Marseilles by Charles V, afforded the most valuable assistance to Barbesieux and Montpezat.

the death of Chabot; but still the king, irritated by the equivocal success of the war, which he had commenced under the conviction that like Cæsar he had only to come, to see, and to conquer, could not reconcile himself to the failure before Perpignan; and accordingly, having resolved not to visit upon d'Annebaut the humiliating defeat which he had suffered upon that occasion, he was persuaded into attributing the disaster to his colleague Montpezat, who was accordingly deprived of his office, and sent into exile for not having implicitly obeyed the orders of his superior officer.

The health of the king, which at this period was beginning rapidly to fail, rendered him unable to pursue the course of dissipation in which he had hitherto indulged; while the moroseness and suspicion to which we have already alluded increased with his infirmities, and was, moreover, augmented by the growing enmity of the two princes. The dauphin had now attained his twenty-third, and the Duke d'Orleans his twenty-first year. Each was emulous of renown, and personally brave; but there the resemblance between them ceased. Henry was grave and taciturn, with a pale complexion, languid expression, and singularly heavy eyes; while Charles was high-coloured, vigorous, frank, and active. The dauphin inspired awe; but his brother won the affections of all about him.

It might have been anticipated that, under these circumstances, the king would have sought sympathy and comfort in the society of his amiable and forbearing wife, but he still continued to evince the same indifference towards her as he had done in his days of pride and

strength. Catherine de' Medici, Madame d'Etampes, and Diane de Poitiers, were all-powerful; and although the undying hatred of the two latter ladies convulsed the court with broils, Francis permitted them to pursue their career of jealousy unrebuked; while the deportment of the dauphiness was so remarkable as to elicit his increased admiration and regard, although in many who looked deeper it awoke a feeling of apprehension which was afterwards fatally justified. Coldly respectful with the queen, and even obsequious towards the favourite, she apparently attached herself more warmly to her rival than to any other individual of the royal circle; soothing her wounded vanity whenever it was stung by the bitter and epigrammatic wit of the duchess, and affecting to be totally unconscious of her *liaison* with the dauphin.

Catherine was a thorough Medicis; she did not exhaust her hatred in vain complaints or passionate sarcasm, but like the tiger was content to watch until she could make her spring deadly. As she was now rarely called upon to hunt or play tennis with the king, whose debility compelled him to abjure all violent exercise, she at once assimilated her own habits to his; and abandoning the pursuits in which she had hitherto appeared to take delight, she turned her whole attention to such an organization of her little court as could not fail to render it attractive to the sensual monarch. The ladies of her household were all eminent for their beauty, their accomplishments, and the splendour of their apparel; while, as regarded their moral attributes, no further detail is necessary than that of the mere fact, that by the gallants of the court they were distinguished as *the light brigade.*

Nothing, in short, could be more profligate than their whole deportment; and although Catherine herself preserved the dignity of her sex, she attempted no interference with the conduct of her attendants; and thus her immediate circle became a hot-bed of vice and intrigue, rendered only the more pernicious by the specious gloss of wit, fascination, and splendour. Her saloons were bright with light, and vocal with song and laughter; every day brought its pleasures, many of them ruinous to the royal treasury, but all welcome to the querulous invalid, who yet clung to the shadow of his former vices, and was eager to encourage himself in the delusion that a few roses were still strewn among the thorns of his painful existence.

It is consequently scarcely surprising that the private apartments of his beautiful daughter-in-law became the chosen resort of the king; nor was it long ere, in the intervals of a ballet, or during the representation of a comedy, she succeeded in possessing herself of all his secrets, and influencing all his actions. Indisposed by bodily suffering for public business, it was only at rare intervals that he would permit his ministers to intrude the subject upon him; but he, nevertheless, discoursed freely on the most important measures with Catherine; who, seated at her tapestry frame near the cushioned divan upon which he reclined, found means, now by one of those equivocal witticisms which never failed to awaken the mirth of the king, and now by a shrewd suggestion, calculated to determine his decision, to mould him to her purpose; and thus, unsuspected and unenvied, to exercise immense influence over state affairs.

That, notwithstanding her extraordinary self-command, she nevertheless failed in concealing at all times the real vindictiveness and hypocrisy of her character, is evident from the fact that she never addressed any individual as "My friend" without alarming their apprehensions: from her lips this apparently familiar and confidential appellation was considered to be as threatening as the "My father" of Francis himself had proved to the unfortunate Semblançay: "Ah, Madame;" exclaimed upon one occasion a gentleman of her household, whom she had so named; "I would far sooner that you called me your enemy; for the title which you have just bestowed upon me, convinces me that you either esteem me a fool, or that I have forfeited your favour; so well and so thoroughly do I understand your nature."

Catherine laughed heartily at this frank expostulation; and it is a curious fact that, with a heart as callous and as bitter as ever beat in the bosom of a woman, she was remarkable for her addiction to laughter, in which she frequently indulged to a most uncourtly excess.

Her worldly wisdom, however, met its reward; for when, on her continuing childless throughout several years, the king was urged by his advisers to induce the dauphin to divorce her, in order to secure a successor, so firm a hold had she taken on his affections that he resolutely refused to countenance such a measure; nor was the prince himself more willing to yield to the suggestion: his attachment to Madame de Brézé, who had made him a father, and his total indifference to the dauphiness, whose forbearance left him at liberty to follow his inclination without comment or reproach, being

more congenial to his apathetic and easy disposition than the prospect of a prolific wife, who might consider herself aggrieved by his infidelity.

The pecuniary resources of Francis had been so much exhausted by the unprofitable campaign of his sons, that before he could again undertake a renewal of the war, he found himself compelled to devise some new method of raising the necessary funds; and he accordingly embraced with eagerness the suggestion of his two closest friends, d'Annebaut and the Cardinal de Tournon,[1] that he should augment the receipts of the salt-excise, by equalizing the price of that important article of consumption throughout the kingdom.

The inhabitants of La Rochelle, however, resisted this impost; and not only refused to pay the additional tax, but, pleading the privileges accorded to them by previous monarchs, and ratified by Francis himself, proceeded to eject by force the officers commissioned to collect it. When apprised of the attempt about to be made, they had assembled within their walls a garrison of three hundred volunteers; and the revolt ere long became so

[1] François de Tournon, the representative of an ancient and illustrious family, was the son of Jacques de Tournon and Jeanne de Polignac. Having entered the church at an early age, he first became a monk of the abbey of St. Antoine, in the diocese of Vienne; then Abbé of La Chaise-Dieu; and subsequently Archbishop of Embrun in 1517, of Bourges in 1523, of Auch in 1537, and of Lyons in 1559. In 1530 he was called to the conclave by Clement VII; and his abilities as a diplomatist were so highly appreciated by Francis I. that he admitted him into his privy council. He was entrusted with three different embassies, to England, Italy, and Spain; founded a college in the city of Tournon, which was the property of his family; and died in 1562.

serious, that the king found it necessary to despatch the Duke d'Orleans and the Maréchal de Tavannes with a strong body of men to the rebellious city, in order to subdue it. As, however, by virtue of an ancient charter the Rochellois had the right of defending their own walls, it was considered expedient to introduce a portion of the troops by stratagem; after which the main body applied for admittance, which was peremptorily refused; when M. de Tavannes showed himself in the main street, at the head of a hundred cuirassiers, while a strong force marched against the gates, declaring that if free ingress were not immediately accorded to the troops of the king, the whole population would be put to the sword, and the city burnt to ashes. Terrified by this menace, the citizens abandoned a resistance to which they felt unequal, and laid down their arms.

Francis no sooner learnt that the town was in the possession of his son, but that the same spirit of disaffection continued to exist along the coast and in the neighbouring islands, than he at once proceeded to Rochelle in person; announcing that he would inflict condign punishment upon the instigators and abettors of the revolt. The threat produced its anticipated effect; a deputation of twenty-five of the principal citizens were sent to meet him from the town, and a similar number from the islands, for the purpose of deprecating his wrath; but they were instantly seized and placed in irons. In the meanwhile he ordered a vast platform to be erected near the residence which had been prepared for him, and caused it to be made known in the city that on the 31st of December he would preside over a tribunal before

which the whole of the inhabitants were summoned to appear; and on that day he accordingly made his entrance into the town, preceded by the manacled deputies; while the whole population, to whom it had been forbidden to cross his path, to ring their bells, or in any other way to recognise his arrival, crowded the churches, where, by prayers and processions, they implored the Almighty to deliver them from a destruction which appeared inevitable.

At one o'clock, Francis, in his royal robes, ascended the throne which occupied the centre of the platform, surrounded by the princes and great officers of state; and there he summoned the advocates of the rebels, who declared, that far from seeking to justify their disobedience, the burghers of the city, and the inhabitants of the islands, were alike anxious to confess their error, and to implore the clemency of their offended monarch. This short but pithy address was barely concluded, when the whole population who were collected at the foot of the platform, throwing themselves on their knees, with bare heads and outstretched hands, joined in a shrill, wild, thrilling cry for mercy.

It was a grand moment for Francis,—one which enabled him to perform an act worthy of the crown he wore; and to his eternal honour be it recorded, that he did not suffer it to escape him. Waving his hand with a quiet dignity which at once silenced the agonized crowd, he looked around him with an expression of reproachful sadness, in which there was no vestige of severity.

"Rise! men of La Rochelle, and of the Isles;" he said, in a low but distinct tone; "Rise. You are pardoned. You have recognised your crime, and I will not

punish you for a treason of which you have already repented. Resume your privileges, and receive back your deputies. The royal troops shall be withdrawn from your city; your arms shall be restored to you; and all that I ask from you in return is to be loyal and faithful to a sovereign who knows how to forgive. Your persons and your property shall alike be respected; nor will I act towards you as a neighbouring monarch acted only a short while since towards the revolted citizens of Ghent; for I love mercy more than justice, and the affection of my subjects better than their confiscated wealth. Nay, more, to convince you of my willingness to forget the past, I will this evening sup with your magistrates, and be served and guarded only by your citizens."

The scene must have been an impressive one. For an instant the immense and closely-packed crowd remained motionless and silent; then another cry,—the cry of relieved and grateful hearts,—went up to heaven; and ere long numerous individuals detached themselves from the mass, and disappeared. In a few minutes every belfry in the city gave forth its peal, a sound unheard during the last three days; the Hôtel-de-Ville was brilliantly illuminated in honour of the king's visit; murmurs of happiness resounded on every side; the soldiers and the citizens pledged each other in brotherly amity; and Francis was thenceforward secure of the loyalty of La Rochelle.

CHAPTER XVII.

[1542-43.]

FRANCIS PERSECUTES THE LUTHERANS—HE DESPATCHES AN AMBASSADOR TO THE SULTAN—THE FRENCH ARMY MARCHES NORTHWARD—D'ANNEBAUT TAKES LANDRECIES—THE FRENCH BESIEGE BINCHE—THE DAUPHIN IS COMPELLED TO RAISE THE SIEGE—FRANCIS FORTIFIES LANDRECIES—THE FRENCH COURT ARRIVES AT RHEIMS—CHARLES V. EFFECTS A RUPTURE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND FRANCE—THE EMPEROR ORGANIZES A NEW ARMY—HE ATTACKS DUEREN—THE CITIZENS REFUSE TO SURRENDER—THE CITY IS TAKEN BY ASSAULT—THE DUKE DE CLÈVES THROWS HIMSELF ON THE MERCY OF THE EMPEROR—HE IS RESTORED TO THE IMPERIAL FAVOUR—THE MARRIAGE OF THE DUKE DE CLÈVES AND JEANNE DE NAVARRE IS ANNULLED—THE EMPEROR BESIEGES LUXEMBOURG—HE RAISES THE SIEGE, AND ESTABLISHES A BLOCKADE—THE IMPERIALISTS TAKE CAMBRAY, AND ESTABLISH THEIR WINTER QUARTERS AT GUISE—SOLYMAN DESPATCHES A FLEET UNDER BARBAROSSA TO THE ASSISTANCE OF FRANCIS—THE COUNT D'ENGHIEN TAKES THE COMMAND OF THE WAR-GALLEYS AT MARSEILLES—THE COMBINED FLEETS ATTACK NICE, AND ARE REPULSED—D'ENGHIEN RETURNS TO LANDRECIES—THE EUROPEAN POWERS ARE INDIGNANT AT THE ALLIANCE FORMED BY FRANCIS WITH THE TURKS—ENORMITIES PERPETRATED BY BARBAROSSA—TERMINATION OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1543.

CHAPTER XVII.

[1542-43.]

THE bright page with which our last chapter concluded was the last which we are fated to turn in the history of Francis I; for, as his malady gained upon him, he became a prey to superstition of the grossest description; and even while he clung with a tenacity as puerile as it was unyielding to the follies and ribaldry of a court which had become the proverb of all Europe, he believed that he could take Heaven by storm through the persecution of the Lutherans. On the 30th of August, 1542, he issued an edict, by which he enjoined the national parliaments, "with all diligence, and in precedence of all other business, to proceed vigorously, and without delay, against those who disobeyed the statutes and holy decrees of the Catholic Church, in order that justice, punishment, correction, and demonstration may be so fully and severely administered, that the example may be a lasting one to others."

This public proclamation was not, however, so dangerous to the persecuted Reformists as the system of *espionnage* which was at the same time organized, and by

which the curates of the several parishes were instructed to examine with caution and subtlety all the inhabitants of their districts whom they suspected of heresy, and to endeavour to lead them to convict themselves: the parliament of Paris, moreover, fulminating the most severe threats against the vendors of obnoxious books, and especially the "Christian Institution" of Calvin.

This barbarous policy was also, undoubtedly, dictated in some degree by the fearful position in which the king found himself placed by his alliance with Solyman, which had excited against him the ire of all the Christian princes. After the murder of Rincon, he had appointed as his successor, by the advice of Du Bellay, a certain captain of infantry, and soldier of fortune, named Paulin Iscalin;[1] a man of extraordinary nerve and capacity, who at once proceeded to Constantinople with a caution which enabled him to reach that city unsuspected by the spies of the emperor. On his arrival, however, he found himself beset by difficulties. Charles V, who was aware of the Sultan's indignation at the failure of Francis during his meditated invasion of Italy, had profited by the circumstance to

[1] Paulin Iscalin was the son of a peasant of the village of La Garde, whose personal beauty when quite a boy attracted the attention of a French corporal, as he was gambolling upon the threshold of his father's cabin. The soldier, struck by his bold and manly appearance, at once offered to adopt him; but, poor as he was, the honest labourer for a long time refused to be separated from his child; nor was it until the boy himself, dazzled by the weapons of his new friend, joined his entreaties to those of the corporal, that the father at length consented to permit him to avail himself of the prospect which had suddenly opened upon him. His courage and discipline soon enabled him to rise to the grade of captain; and after his successful mission to Solyman, Francis I. created him Baron de la Garde.

detach him still further from the French interests; and accordingly, when Iscalin presented himself as the accredited envoy of his sovereign, he refused to grant him an audience, alleging that, as he had lost faith in his master, he desired no communication with him upon any subject.

The zealous agent was not, however, to be so easily repulsed; and, while he abstained for a time from prosecuting his mission, he employed himself in securing friends about the court, in which attempt he proved so successful that he at length ingratiated himself with an aga of the Janissaries, by whose influence he obtained the desired interview; when he so skilfully ministered alike to the vanity and the ambition of Solyman, while he plausibly explained all the motives by which Francis had been induced to turn his arms against the Low Countries, instead of prosecuting his design on Piedmont, that the sultan ultimately declared himself convinced, and ready to fulfil all the pledges to which he was bound by the treaty that existed between them.

Iscalin then urged His Highness to despatch a fleet to Marseilles, to co-operate with that of the French king; and Solyman, to whose warlike spirit every period of inaction was a pang, at once consented to send Cheir-Eddyn Barbarossa, the King of Algiers, his own high admiral, to the coast of Italy, with express orders to follow the counsels of his Christian colleague in every emergency. Iscalin next attempted to engage the Venetian states to include themselves in this alliance against the power of the emperor, but the gold of Charles proving more influential than any representations which he could offer, he was unable to effect his object.

Meanwhile the campaign of 1543 was commenced, as that of the previous year had already been, by Van Rossem, the maréchal of the Duke de Clèves. The duke himself, profiting by a dense fog, had in the month of November succeeded in retaking Dueren; and Van Rossem, on the 24th of March, followed up this advantage by defeating the imperialists at Sittard in the duchy of Juliers.

This event at once determined the measures of Francis, who decided upon marching his whole army northward; but at the same time instructed Antoine, Duke de Vendôme, who had recently succeeded to that title by the death of his father, to throw supplies into Térouenne; while d'Annebaut was ordered to attack Avesnes. This he did with so much vigour that the town was on the point of a surrender, when, by a counter-order, he was recalled to undertake the siege of Landrecies. The state of that city was, however, so deplorable, that, although the garrison were well provided, both with ammunition and provisions, they no sooner learnt the approach of the enemy than they determined to abandon it; and had Francis been guided by the advice of Langei, he might have cut off their retreat; but, instead of making them prisoners, he allowed them time to burn down the fortifications, and the spacious magazines containing their stores, and to make their escape to the forest of Mormaux, where they were beyond his reach.

D'Annebaut, consequently, only took possession of a waste of ruins; and it soon became evident that the king had arranged no fixed plan for the campaign; as the Duke de Vendôme had scarcely taken the town of Bapaume, and ascertained that the citadel was on the

point of capitulating, than he was recalled in his turn, and compelled to abandon his conquest and join the main army at Marolles, a league beyond Landrecies, Francis having hastily resolved upon fortifying that city, and being anxious to cover the engineers with as formidable a force as he could assemble; but in order that the army should not remain altogether inactive, he authorized the dauphin to possess himself of the citadel of Emery, the towns of Barlemont and Mauberge, and ultimately to attack Binche. In the first three of these enterprises the prince succeeded; and he encountered such slight resistance at Binche that he anticipated equal good fortune; but, although the town yielded with facility, the citadel resisted with a pertinacity by which he was soon undeceived.

Prepared for the attack, the imperialists had strengthened the garrison, and victualled it for a siege; a precaution which afforded them an immense advantage over the dauphin, whose army was not only a small one, but moreover considerably harassed, and very scantily provided with provisions. The incessant fire of the imperialists meanwhile told fearfully upon his troops; and becoming rapidly aware of his inability to sustain a conflict so unequal, he applied to the king both for supplies and a reinforcement. To this appeal, however, Francis replied by declaring that he could not weaken the defence before Landrecies until the fortifications were completed; and that the dauphin must raise the siege of Binche if he found himself unable to prosecute it without aid. This decision, against which there was no appeal, was a bitter disappointment, not only to the prince himself, but also to the officers under his command, among whom was

Gaspard de Coligny, who afterwards fell a victim in the bloody massacre of St. Bartholomew.

The fortifications of Landrecies were no sooner completed, and the city well garrisoned, than Francis struck his camp, abandoned the unimportant places taken by his son, disbanded a portion of his army, and took up his residence at Rheims; where, in order to recompense himself for his late exertions, he summoned the ladies of his court to join him; and profiting by a temporary return of strength, and relief from pain, once more divided his time between the chase, and the society of the bright circle which he had collected about him.

Nothing in the ancient city, where he had taken up his temporary abode, prophesied an early and inevitable war in which the best interests of the whole kingdom were involved; the splendid litters of the two royal favourites, with their attendant train of pages and footmen, traversed the picturesque streets, exciting the wonder and admiration of the honest burghers; groups of magnificently dressed nobles followed in their wake; the royal guards flaunted their white plumes in the cathedral square; bands of musicians disturbed the silence of midnight; and torches flitted like meteors on all sides, as they lighted the young and gay upon their errands of gallantry and debauch. During the day the horns of the royal hunt re-echoed through the forest; and many a wondering peasant concealed himself in the underwood as the gallant train swept by, almost persuaded that it was a mere vision which he beheld. Every moment was at that time precious to France; and while her monarch thus suffered them to pass unimproved, his more prudent enemy was rendering each subservient to his interests.

Previously to a contemplated progress through Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries, for the purpose of alienating their several populations from the interests of Francis, Charles earnestly endeavoured once more to detach Henry VIII. from his favourite ally; and he could scarcely have made the attempt at a more fortunate juncture. Enraged at the invasion of his territories by the troops under the Duke of Norfolk, the Scottish king resolved, in his turn, to attack the English; but he found no responsive feeling on the part of his subjects, who either openly resisted, or tacitly disobeyed all his orders, an insult to his dignity which he resented by transferring the command of his army to Oliver Sinclair, whose authority the Scottish barons refused to recognise.

A second and unimportant demonstration on the part of the English, before which his own troops fled without resistance, leaving many of their principal officers in the hands of the enemy, and which, moreover, involved a great sacrifice of life, completed the discomfiture of the unhappy prince; who, yielding without any further effort to his fate, fell into a state of hypochondriacism, which terminated his existence on the 14th of December, 1542, leaving an infant daughter, the fair and unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, whom Henry VIII. at once resolved to render a bond of union between the two countries, by uniting her to his own son and successor.

In this project he was, however, destined to be thwarted. The dowager-queen, Marie de Guise, was supported by all the national nobility in her desire to secure the protection of France against the pretensions of Henry, a step to which she was moreover strongly urged by Bethune, the

Cardinal of St. Andrews; and she accordingly applied to Francis for protection, who, without hesitation, furnished her with troops and money; when a series of intrigues on both sides excited such ill feeling between the two sovereigns that the English king readily accepted the overtures of Charles, and furnished him with ten thousand men as an earnest of his future support.

Although the army of Algiers had been destroyed, the emperor had only required time to organize a second; and this the supineness of Francis enabled him to do. From Barcelona he had proceeded to Genoa, where he was met by Del Guasto, Pietro-Luigi Farnese,[1] Fernando Gonzaga, and Cosmo de' Medici, Duke of Florence; the latter of whom redeemed from him the fortresses of Florence and Livourna, at the cost of two hundred thousand golden crowns. Towards the close of June he had a conference with the pope, which produced no political results; and ultimately he continued his route to Germany, where he immediately commenced his operations by an attack upon the Duke de Clèves. On the 22d of August he presented himself before the city of Dueren, with an overpowering army, consisting of thirty thousand foot soldiers, and

[1] Pietro-Luigi Farnese was the son of Paul III, who united the states of Parma and Placenza, and erected them into a duchy in his favour; creating him Lord of Nepi, Duke de Castro, and Standard-bearer of the Church. In 1540 he was despatched by the pope against Perugia, which had revolted, and endeavoured to throw off the papal authority; and having taken the city, he devastated all the adjacent country, and put the principal citizens to death. After his elevation to the duchy, he excited the enmity of the nobility by his assumption and arrogance; and a conspiracy having been formed against him, he was assassinated in 1547.

four thousand cavalry, under the banner of the Prince of Orange; a demonstration for which the citizens were ill prepared, having been assured by the agents of Francis that the emperor had perished in his retreat from Algiers.

The imperial heralds who summoned them to surrender, were accordingly treated with ridicule, the garrison declaring that they did not recognise the sommation of a dead enemy; a sarcasm which so irritated the troops that they immediately opened a battery and effected a breach in the walls, which enabled them to take the place by assault on the 26th. Still writhing under the taunt with which their heralds had been dismissed, the infuriated soldiery no sooner found themselves masters of the city, than they indulged in the most frightful excesses. They were aware of the declaration of the emperor, that he would so revenge himself upon the Duke de Clèves, that he would not leave one stone upon another in any of his fortresses; and they, accordingly, threw off all restraint. Not a single citizen of the ill-fated town escaped: neither age nor sex afforded protection to the vanquished; and before the day closed no soul remained alive, save those who had entered the breach.

This fatal massacre paralysed the other cities of the duchy; and while the Duke de Clèves despatched courier upon courier to implore the aid of the French king, (who, by disbanding his army while Charles was augmenting his own, had rendered himself powerless,) the imperialists took in succession Juliers and Ruremonde, neither of which attempted even a show of resistance; and Venloo, which surrendered immediately that the enemy appeared before its gates. Until this moment the duke had relied

upon the support of France; but now, as he saw city after city of his duchy fall into the power of the emperor, against whom he was utterly unable to contend without assistance, he resolved, in a paroxysm of despair, to throw himself at the feet of the conqueror, and implore his clemency. After considerable difficulty he was enabled to make his way to the imperial presence, and to explain his errand, but the vengeance of Charles was not yet satiated; and he was suffered to kneel for a considerable time before any notice was vouchsafed by his haughty suzerain; nor was his pardon ultimately conceded until he had bound himself to renounce the reformed religion; to acknowledge himself the vassal of the emperor and the King of the Romans; to renounce the alliance of France; to release the population of the duchy of Gueldres from their oath of allegiance to his person; and, finally, to transfer Van Rossem and his band of quasi-freebooters to the imperial service. To these conditions, bitter as they were, the unfortunate prince was compelled to accede; and, in consideration of his obedience, he was reinstated by Charles in his sovereignty of the duchy of Juliers, now almost entirely in the hands of the imperialists.

Throughout the whole of this struggle, Francis, although unable to render any efficient aid to his nephew and ally, had never ceased to give him assurances of effectual support; and in order, as he declared, to prove his sincerity, he confided the hereditary Princess of Navarre, his bride, to the care of Du Bellay, with orders to convey her to her husband; after which, having at length succeeded in assembling a strong body of troops,

he entered the duchy of Luxembourg, where he retook several minor cities, and ultimately possessed himself of the capital; whence he was about to despatch a force of ten thousand men under d'Annebaut to the support of the Duke de Clèves, when he was apprised that the latter had made his submission to the emperor.

This intelligence at the same time reached M. du Bellay and Jeanne de Navarre, who had already reached Soisson; and the young princess was no sooner informed of the fact than she resolutely refused to proceed beyond that city. She was well aware that her marriage had been distasteful to both her parents; and young though she was, for she had only at this period attained her fourteenth year, she had retained memories of her enforced husband by no means agreeable to her own tastes; and thus Guillaume de Clèves, the brother of the ill-used Anne, whom the English king had repudiated, was destined to meet a similar fate at the hands of a mere girl. Du Bellay remonstrated in vain; the princess remained firm; and when, enraged by her opposition, the duke despatched a herald-at-arms to Francis to demand his wife, for whom he had received a safe-conduct from the emperor, he had the additional mortification of being told that, so protected, he could require no assistance from the monarch of France, and that he had only to apply to the King and Queen of Navarre.

As we have already stated, Marguerite and her husband availed themselves of this opportunity to annul the marriage; and the hand of the princess was five years subsequently bestowed upon Antoine de Bourbon, Duke de Vendôme; while the Duke de Clèves obtained that of a daughter of Ferdinand, King of the Romans.

Contrary to the advice of his generals, Francis had determined upon fortifying Luxembourg; and having confided the command of that city to the Prince de Melfi,[1] he retired to Coucy, five leagues beyond Laon; while the emperor, having augmented his army to fifty thousand men, including the troops furnished by Henry VIII, commenced simultaneously the sieges of Landrecies, Guise, and Luxembourg; the former in person, and those of the latter by Fernando Gonzago and Guillaume de Furstembourg, who had abandoned the cause of Francis for that of his rival. The siege of Luxembourg was continued until the winter was far advanced; Gonzaga, after several attempts, renounced his attack on Guise; and the main body of the imperialists concentrated itself in the neighbourhood of Landrecies. The great strength of the citadel determined the joint governors, M. de Lalande[2] and the Sieur

[1] The Prince de Melfi was the grandson of Giovanni Caraccioli, the secretary of Jeanne II, Queen of Naples, in whom he inspired so violent a passion, that, not contented with enriching him, she made him Grand Connétable of the kingdom, and Duke de Melfi. In 1432, however, either wearied of her favourite, or dissatisfied with the return which he made for her munificence, she caused him to be assassinated. The prince bravely defended the city of Melfi against M. de Lautrec, until compelled to surrender, together with his wife and children. The whole of his cities were sacked, his property destroyed, and himself made prisoner. The emperor, having refused to pay his ransom, he had recourse to Francis I, by whom he was pardoned and liberated at great cost. He proved worthy of the favour thus accorded to him, and became one of the most zealous and trustworthy of the king's generals.

[2] M. de Lalande was a veteran officer of great merit, but of small fortune, whose courage at Landrecies was recompensed by Francis with the appointment of steward to his household. Owing to his military rearing and warlike habits, the courtiers were wont to

d'Esse,[1] to abandon the lower quarter of the town, which, from its defective means of defence, would, as they apprehended, involve considerable difficulty, while it promised no adequate advantage; and the imperialists no sooner became aware of this fact than they threw a strong body of troops into the vacated streets, by whom the garrison were so much harassed that it was resolved to dislodge them at any sacrifice. The skill and courage evinced by both officers throughout this enterprise acted so powerfully upon the men under their command that they undertook without a murmur the most threatening enterprises. Constant sallies were made from the citadel headed by one or other of their brave and adventurous leaders; and these were uniformly so well conceived, and so courageously executed, that they succeeded in spiking the guns, killing the miners, and fatiguing the troops of the enemy, almost without intermission. The winter had, however, set in with great severity, and the garrison were beginning to suffer from a scarcity of food. Their wine and beer were totally exhausted, and the troops, men and officers alike, were reduced to a half ration of bread.

declare that he carried his staff of office like a pike. He was nevertheless greatly respected, although he never attained to any higher grade, from the fact of his obscure birth.

[1] The Sieur d'Esse was the descendant of a noble and ancient family, who commenced his career as page to the Sénéchal de Poitou, whom he accompanied to Naples when his master went thither in the train of Charles VIII. At the close of a few years he was permitted to join the army, where he distinguished himself so greatly as to be appointed the lieutenant of the king at Landrecies, and, for his gallant conduct during the siege, was made a gentleman of the Privy Chamber. He was also captain of a company of fifty men-at-arms, and a knight of the Order of St. Michael.

Aware of this circumstance, the emperor, desisting from all further attack, contented himself with blockading the city, in the belief that he should soon be enabled to reduce it by famine; but, despite the vigilance of his spies, Du Bellay by a clever stratagem contrived to throw in abundant supplies; and at the same time to alarm the imperialists, by concealing the cattle and sumpter-horses in the centre of his escort, and thus giving it the appearance of a dense and formidable body of cavalry. Under this impression the emperor, fearing that he should be surrounded, hastily retired from the city, a movement which determined the fate of the siege; and, although Francis had constantly assured his troops that he ardently desired an engagement, it is a curious and inexplicable fact, that, while the two armies were in such close contact that constant skirmishes took place between the out-lying picquets, he suffered the enemy to withdraw without molestation; and, in his turn, made a night-retreat to Guise, where he took up his winter-quarters.

The emperor had not, however, wholly lost his time, as four days after he raised the siege of Landrecies he took possession of Cambray, which he garrisoned, and strengthened by the erection of a citadel at the cost of the inhabitants; silencing their murmurs by assuring them that he did so solely to secure the safety of their city in the event of any molestation from the French.

Solyman meanwhile redeemed his word. He pursued his conquests in Hungary, and took Strigonia and Alba; at the same time that he despatched Barbarossa with a hundred and twelve galleys, forty vessels of war, a number

of transports, and fourteen thousand fighting men, to join the fleet of the French king. At Calabria the Moslem admiral cast anchor, and having landed a considerable body of troops, he cut down the olive trees, vines, and palms, and carried off a number of the peasantry, whom he subsequently sold as slaves; he then burnt down the city of Reggio, which had been abandoned by its inhabitants, the whole of whom had fled to the mountains. His appearance at the mouth of the Tiber next spread consternation throughout Rome; but this was allayed by Iscalin, who assured the Cardinal de Carpi, its governor, that the Turkish allies of his master would respect the neutrality of the pope; and on the 5th of July this formidable armament reached the shores of Provence without committing any further ravages along the coast.

It would appear that Francis, even although he had invited the co-operation of the Infidels, had placed but little faith in their advent; for it is certain that instead of preparing a fleet whose magnitude might have inspired them with respect, and placing it under a commander whose age and experience must have secured his authority, he merely despatched to Marseilles François de Bourbon, Count d'Enghien,[1] then in his twenty-third year, at the head of twenty-two galleys, with a few hundred men-at-arms, and with a sum barely adequate to their immediate

[1] The Count d'Enghien, the son of Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, and brother to the Duke de Vendôme, was born at La Fère, in 1519. In 1543 he took the city of Nice, advanced into Piedmont, and won the celebrated victory of Cerisola; in the following year. He became governor of Hainault, Piedmont, and Languedoc; and was killed in action in 1545.

subsistence. Undismayed, however, by this circumstance, discouraging as it was, the young prince, who was eager to distinguish himself, eagerly acceded to a proposition which was made to him that he should attempt the reduction of the citadel of Nice, accompanied by an assurance that he would receive support from within the walls. Inexperienced as he was, however, the Count d'Enghien had too much prudence to endanger the whole of his force; and, apprehending treachery, he resolved to send four of his galleys to reconnoitre, while he lay-to with the remainder within gunshot of the shore. The result proved the sagacity of his previsions; for the four galleys had no sooner rounded a small headland behind which Doria was lying in ambush, than they were attacked by an overpowering force, and he was compelled to set sail with the remainder of his fleet.

When Barbarossa arrived at Marseilles, and saw the insignificant preparations which had been made for the campaign in which he was called upon to assist, his rage knew no bounds. Bitterly did he vituperate the dogs of Christians who had invited a great fleet from a distant country, only to endanger the lives of the men and the honour of their leader, by requiring them to act in conjunction with a handful of troops and a beardless boy; and so great was his irritation, that Iscalin found it necessary to travel post to Guise, in order to urge upon the king the expediency of forwarding an immediate reinforcement, and a supply of money and ammunition, as well as instructions for the commencement of the campaign; the Algerine monarch having threatened that should the summer pass by without

affording him an opportunity of signalizing himself, he would induce the sultan to revenge him upon those by whom he had been deceived.

Eager to pacify his dangerous ally, Francis accordingly despatched a few troops with Iscalin to strengthen the fleet, together with an assurance that more should follow without delay; and instructed the Count d'Enghien to make an immediate attack on Nice. This was accordingly done; and on the 10th of August seven thousand French and fifteen thousand Turks appeared before the city. After some difficulty the town itself fell into the hands of the besiegers, not being sufficiently strong to resist the powerful artillery which was brought against it; but the victors gained little by their conquest, as the inhabitants had removed every article of value beyond the walls; while the citadel resisted all their attempts, its natural position, together with its artifical defences, rendering it almost impregnable. Moreover, the Count d'Enghien had nearly exhausted both his provisions and his ammunition; while the citizens of Marseilles, to whom he appealed in his extremity, refused to render him any assistance, declaring that they would not, even inferentially, act in conjunction with the enemies of Christendom.

In this emergency the prince had no other alternative than to apply to Barbarossa himself, humiliating as he could not but feel such a necessity to be; nor did the Infidel ally of Francis spare him one drop of the bitter draught which he was compelled to drain; for already indignant at a defeat which he had not anticipated, the exasperation of the Turkish admiral increased

to such a degree, that he openly ridiculed the pretensions of a Christian monarch who undertook a war when he was unable to provide his troops with powder and ball. A final attempt was made, however, with the assistance of the ammunition thus procured, but it proved as abortive as those by which it had been preceded; and the siege was accordingly raised on the 8th of September.

Francis had the less cause to regret this result, as Barbarossa had, immediately upon the surrender of the town, claimed a right to garrison it with his own troops, upon the plea that they were its real captors; a claim which was imperatively denied by M. d'Enghien, who was well aware that although the city was comparatively of little value to France, there was not another port on the northern coast of the Mediterranean so valuable to the Algerine pirates, from the facility which it afforded of extending and protecting their depredations. Moreover, the count was informed that the Duke de Savoie and the Marquis del Guasto were advancing with a strong force in aid of the town, at the very moment when he became convinced that he could not calculate upon the good faith of his discontented colleague; and the unfortunate city was consequently sacked, and then fired; after which the prince, who was led to believe that a general engagement was about to take place between the emperor and his own sovereign at Landrecies, marched his troops towards that citadel.

This ill-omened and unnatural coalescence with the Infidels was destined to prove fatal to the French king in many ways. In the first place, nothing had been accomplished. A mighty array had been brought before

a single stronghold, and had signally failed. All Christendom had been thrown into a state of panic, when a handful of native troops might have achieved the same result. The last possession of a petty and unoffending sovereign, (that sovereign being moreover his own uncle, and perfectly independent of any rupture between himself and the emperor,) had been recklessly and unjustly attacked; and, as a climax, Francis had been so much alarmed by the indignant menaces of the Turkish admiral, and so much wounded by his expressed contempt for the inefficiency of his allies, which he persisted in attributing to their poverty, that he could not venture to allow him to return to Constantinople until he had appeased his discontent.

Presents were consequently despatched to Barbarossa and his officers in such profusion, that these, and the maintenance of his fleet to which the French king was pledged, are stated to have cost the nation the immense sum of eight hundred thousand crowns. The port of Toulon was, moreover, abandoned to the Turkish fleet for the winter; and all the inhabitants of the city were compelled to retire beyond the walls, in order to leave the town free for the occupancy of the Infidels. Barbarossa repaid this generosity and confidence in the manner which might justly have been anticipated. When he at length withdrew in his turn, he illustrated his departure by attacking several cities on the coast of Naples and Tuscany, and by sacking and depopulating the island of Lipari, whose inhabitants he carried into slavery.

The relief of Nice was no sooner effected, than Del

Guasto returned to Piedmont, where the strength of his army enabled him ere long to render himself master of the whole of the open country; while M. de Boutières, from want of troops, was compelled to remain inactive. The city of Montdovi was besieged, and being unable to withstand the forces brought against it, was constrained to capitulate, on the understanding that the garrison should march out with all the honours of war, carrying with them their property and ammunition. The treaty was, however, shamefully violated, for the unfortunate men had no sooner opened their gates than they were put to the sword. After this act of perfidious cruelty, the insatiable marquis next marched against Carignano, where he was again destined to prove successful; and De Boutières, having received a reinforcement of nine thousand men, advanced into the north of Piedmont, in the hope of retrieving his reverses, and laid siege to Ypres; which he had nearly succeeded in taking when he was apprised that he was superseded in his command by the Count d'Enghien, whom the king had recently appointed as his lieutenant in that province; and who, having already reached Chiras, had sent to him to demand an escort.

This was an affront which the zealous veteran, who had failed rather from want of resources than from any deficiency of courage or ability, could not calmly brook; and he accordingly raised the siege, and marched his whole army to Chiras, where he transferred his authority to the prince, declaring that he wished him better fortune than he had himself experienced; nor could all the expostulations of the count induce him to remain at his post.

"It has been considered expedient to supersede me in my command;" he said bitterly; "and to place the troops who have fought and suffered with me in the hands of a younger general than myself. My path, therefore, is plain."

On the following morning he left the city; and having retired to one of his estates, he appeared to have foresworn altogether his military career. But Boutières was as generous as he was brave; and it was not long ere at the battle of Cerisola he revenged himself in a manner worthy of his high character.

The indignation of all the Christian princes was at once profound and legitimate. An indelible disgrace had fallen upon the French banners—they had been unfurled side by side with those of the enemies of the Church; nor had Francis even hesitated to direct his own cousin to tread the deck of a Turkish corsair. Cities had been burnt, villages ravaged, countries laid waste, free men captured, helpless women outraged, and the progress of civilization retarded by his selfish and narrow-hearted policy; he had weakly and unprofitably justified the enmity of the emperor, and had alienated the confidence and regard of all who had trusted in him. The blood that had been spilt, the desolation that had been created, and the enormous outlay which had been made, had availed him nothing; and with an exhausted treasury, diminished popularity, and general distrust, Francis I. terminated the campaign of 1543; so bright in prospect, and so disastrous in its results.

CHAPTER XVIII.

[1544.]

RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES—FINANCIAL EMBARRASSMENTS OF FRANCIS—SALE OF JUDICIAL OFFICES—THE FRENCH KING RAISES A NEW ARMY—D'ENGHIEN BLOCKADES CARIGNANO—BLAISE DE MONTLUC PROCEEDS TO COURT TO DEMAND SUPPLIES, AND PERMISSION TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY—SUCCESSFUL ELOQUENCE OF MONTLUC—VICTORY OF CARIGNANO—THE CITIZENS OF AST CLOSE THEIR GATES AGAINST THE IMPERIALISTS—MORTIFICATIONS OF DEL GUASTO AT MILAN—THE JEWELLED WATCH—THE EMPEROR AND HENRY VIII. INVADE FRANCE—SIEGE OF ST. DIZIER—RENEWED TREACHERY OF THE DUCHESS D'ETAMPES—ST. DIZIER SURRENDERS—MUTUAL DISTRUST OF CHARLES V. AND HENRY VIII.—THE ENGLISH KING BESIEGES BOULOGNE AND MONTREUIL—THE TWO POTENTATES CEASE TO ACT IN CONCERT—CHARLES V. ADVANCES TO CHÂLONS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

[1544.]

The campaign which had just terminated, despite the blood that had been spilt, the treasure that had been lavished, and the panic which it had caused to the whole of Europe, ended, as we have shown, most unprofitably for both parties; and had, nevertheless, left each in a position which necessitated a renewed struggle. Personal animosity was so interwoven with national policy on either side, that a reconciliation upon equal terms had long been hopeless; and it was evident that the peace of Christendom hinged upon that unequivocal supremacy of one or the other sovereign which was yet to be decided. The attitude of Charles V. was threatening. He had surrounded himself by allies all more or less powerful, and he had organized an immense army; while Francis had made enemies even of those who were previously devoted to his cause; and although the legions which he had formed provided a strong body of infantry, his treasury was exhausted; and the undue favour he evinced to his gendarmerie, which was composed entirely of men of good family, gave umbrage to

his foot soldiers, who, whatever might be their merit, were treated with comparative neglect. Aware of the discontent which had been thus engendered, but still influenced too entirely by the *prestige* of birth to renounce so fatal an error, the king placed no reliance upon these latter troops; while from want of funds he was unable to make such levies of Swiss and German soldiers as might have supplied their place. He could no longer raise a loan, as the merchants who had formerly advanced money to the government, having been unable to recover it, declined to furnish further supplies; and he was equally unable to impose new taxes, the country being already crushed beneath the weight of those which had been already inflicted. In this extremity Francis resolved to create a number of new judicial offices, which were sold at an exorbitant rate, without regard to the rank of the purchasers; and were eagerly bought up by the citizens, who by such means acquired augmented importance, and were protected from many abuses to which their want of birth had hitherto exposed them.

Aware that the failure of De Boutières in Piedmont had arisen entirely from his want of supplies, although unwilling to admit such a conviction, Francis had no sooner completed his financial arrangements than he raised a force of four thousand Gascons, and five thousand Italians and Swiss, levied in the cantons of Berne and Fribourg, of which he formed an army for the Count d'Enghien. Nevertheless, the position of the prince was an onerous one; his youth excited the jealousy and distrust of the veteran officers, his near relationship to the king discouraged the higher nobility engaged in the war,

whose ambition was thus checked; and the extreme severity of the season rendered every manœuvre at once hazardous and difficult. The intensity of the frost was so great that the wine became frozen in the barrels, and was obliged to be broken up in lumps, and sold to the troops by weight. Everything, in short, appeared to conspire against the new general; for although the military talents of De Boutières were not of that brilliant description which could inspire an army with entire confidence, he had nevertheless so endeared himself to the soldiery that they did not attempt to conceal their discontent at his departure.

Soon, however, the young prince by his affability, his firmness, and his watchful care of their interests, succeeded in allaying this regret; and he had no sooner taken the necessary measures to ensure the safety of the few fortresses which still remained in the hands of the French, than he proceeded to blockade Carignano, in the hope of reducing it by famine. Since its capture Del Guasto had repaired the fortifications of the city, furnished it with a garrison of four thousand men, and provided it with ammunition and stores; while his own army was moreover greatly superior to that of his adversary. He, therefore, no sooner perceived the intention of the prince, than he endeavoured by manœuvring in the vicinity of Carignano to throw in additional supplies; after which he designed to pass the Pô, and thus cut off the communication of the enemy with the marquisate of Saluzzo, whence they derived all their subsistence.

Had he succeeded in this attempt, the French troops must have perished from famine, as they would have been

driven back upon a stretch of country entirely devastated; and he was induced to believe that he should ultimately compel them to this measure, on perceiving that d'Enghien carefully avoided the risk of a general engagement.

Such, indeed, was the fact. The parting command of the king having been that the prince should avoid an open battle, and confine himself to the capture of such fortresses as he might be able to reduce. But ere long the ardent spirit of the young commander revolted against this enforced supineness; a long arrear of pay was due to his troops, who complained that while they suffered all the privations of poverty, they were not permitted to revenge themselves upon the enemy; and the taunts of the imperialists, who believed, or affected to believe, that he was afraid to meet them, rendered him equally dissatisfied. Early in March, therefore, he resolved to despatch a messenger to the monarch to represent the difficult and humiliating nature of his position, and to entreat the royal permission to give battle to the opposing army.

The prince was fortunate in his selection of an envoy, his choice having fallen upon Blaise de Montluc,[1] a veteran

[1] Blaise de Lasseran-Masencomme, Seigneur de Montluc, was descended from a branch of the house of Montesquieu, and was born about the year 1500. He entered the army at the age of seventeen, and was knighted in 1544. He distinguished himself on several important occasions; at Bicocca, Pavia, and the sieges of Perpignano, and Casal; and was appointed governor of Montcalquier and Alba. While lieutenant of the king at Sienna, he defended that city for a considerable time against the Imperialists, and only surrendered after a long and hopeless siege. For this act of gallantry, he was rewarded by the Order of St. Michael. In 1558 he became

Gascon, no less remarkable for his fearless frankness than for his daring courage and the exuberance of his animal spirits.

On the arrival of M. de Montluc at court, Francis, after having read his despatches, summoned a council at which he desired him to attend. All the princes and great officers of state were present, including the dauphin, who stood behind the seat of the king; the Count de Saint-Pol being placed on his right hand, and d'Annebaut on his left. The circle was no sooner formed than the monarch opened the proceedings by addressing the anxious envoy.

"Montluc;" he said; "you will return without delay to Piedmont, in order to inform M. d'Enghein of the decision at which I and my council have arrived; and I wish you to hear the reasons by which we are compelled to refuse his request."

The Count de Saint-Pol then entered into a detail of these reasons, urging the meditated invasion of Picardy and Champagne by the emperor and Henry VIII; and declaring that the success of the prince, even could it be insured, would be comparatively unimportant, while his defeat would involve the most serious consequences, and might even tend to endanger the safety of the kingdom.

colonel-general of the French infantry; in 1564 lieutenant-general of the Government of Guyenne; and throughout twenty years was an active and remorseless persecutor of the Calvinists. In 1574 he was created Maréchal of France; and three years subsequently he expired at his estate of Estillac in the Agénois. He was the author of a work entitled *Commentaires à l'exemple de César*, which Henry IV. called "the Soldier's Bible;" and of some curious and gossiping chronicles, highly illustrative of the times.

"Rather," he concluded; "let us abandon Piedmont altogether than incur so useless a hazard; or, if we deem it expedient to retain our present possessions in that province, let us simply act on the defensive, and avoid all gratuitous contact with the enemy."

These sentiments were echoed by d'Annebaut; and finally all the members of the council expressed the same opinion.

Meanwhile the excitable and eager Montluc had been standing first upon one leg, and then upon the other, quivering with impatience, and making the most hideous grimaces in his attempt to control himself. At length, however, his forbearance was exhausted; he had forgotten even the presence of the sovereign, and was about to speak unbidden, when his intention was detected by the Count de Saint-Pol, who with an imperative gesture whispered; "Gently, gently." This attracted the attention of Francis, who upon witnessing the contortions of the rebuked envoy could not restrain a smile. In an instant, however, he recovered his gravity, and once more addressing the discomfited soldier, he asked; "Have you perfectly comprehended, Montluc, the reasons which restrain me from complying with the wishes of M. d'Enghein?"

"Perfectly, Sire;" was the ready reply; "but if your majesty could be induced to allow me to give my opinion upon the subject, I should be glad to do so; although it may have no effect either upon yourself or your council."

"Speak then;" said the king good-humouredly; "speak freely, and we will hear you."

"Then, Sire;" said Montluc, throwing himself into a military attitude which however he did not long retain, and increasing in gesticulation as he proceeded with his harangue; "I will not trouble your majesty with a lengthy speech: there are between five and six thousand of my countrymen beyond the Alps, all good and tried soldiers, who are eager for glory; besides these, there are as many Swiss, who will fight for you to the death as we are ready to do. There, then, Sire, are nine thousand men upon whom you can depend. We will lead the van; and it will be hard if we are not followed by the Italians and Gryérians, who cannot fail us for very shame. With one arm tied up we should beat the enemy; fancy, therefore, what we shall do with both arms free, and a good blade in our right hand."

"Surely, Sire;" interposed M. de Saint-Pol; "you will not suffer yourself to be influenced by the rhapsodies of this madman, who is intent only upon fighting, and careless of the consequences which such an imprudence may involve? Considerations of so serious a nature as this are too important for the heated brain of a Gascon."

The enthusiasm of Montluc had, however, produced its effect; and while the king remained for a moment silent, the dauphin continued to make the most encouraging gestures to the envoy.

D'Annebaut, who, with the quick apprehension of a courtier, at once detected the hesitation of Francis, and the anxiety of the dauphin, now interposed in his turn; "Confess, Sire;" he said; "that the energy and good

faith of this brave captain have almost induced you to waver in your resolve. God alone knows what may be the result should you decide upon allowing this battle. Take my advice, therefore, appeal to Him; and then declare your final resolution."

Thus adjured, Francis removed his plumed cap, and with clapsed hands and upraised eyes, remained for a brief interval in prayer; then, throwing his cap vehemently upon the table, he shouted; "Let them fight! Let them fight!"

The council shortly afterwards broke up; but before the king retired he desired Montluc to approach, and graciously laying his hand upon his arm, he said kindly; "On your return, Montluc, commend me to my cousin D'Enghien, and all my other captains; and tell them, that if I have yielded to their wishes in opposition to the advice of my most trusty councillors, it has been because I have a firm confidence in their valour and discretion, and that I confidently anticipate a victory."

"I will repeat the message of your majesty, word by word;" exclaimed the blunt soldier; "and those who may have wavered heretofore will become brave when they hear it."

As the Count de Saint-Pol came into contact with Montluc, who remained stationary until all the members of the council had preceded him from the hall, he said bitterly; "Montluc, you are a madman; and you have this day caused either a great gain, or a great loss to your country."

"Have patience, my good lord;" said the Gascon, too much elated by his triumph to resent the uncourtliness

of the address; "Make yourself easy; and rely upon it, that the next intelligence which you receive from Piedmont will be that we have fricaseed the enemy, and have nothing left to do but to make a meal of them."

Montluc on the morrow took his formal leave of the king, and commenced his journey back to Italy, accompanied by a crowd of the young courtiers, who were anxious to join in a campaign which now promised them both excitement and renown; and among whom were scions of many of the most ancient and noble families of France. He was shortly afterwards followed by Du Bellay, whom Francis had promised to despatch with a strong reinforcement, and the arrears of pay due to the troops. As usual, however, he only partially, and very inadequately redeemed his pledge, for the sum thus sent amounted only to forty-eight thousand crowns, instead of the three hundred thousand requisite to release the prince from his obligations towards the army; and with such a mere handful of men, that they barely sufficed to furnish him with a sufficient escort to protect him upon his way.

Disappointed as he was, M. d'Enghien would not suffer himself to be discouraged. Eager to meet Del Guasto upon equal terms, he borrowed a large sum of money from the young nobles who had joined his banner, and commenced paying his troops; who, immediately they were apprised that the king consented to their doing battle upon the enemy, became less eager to enforce their demands.

The imperialist general, who was as anxious as his adversary for an engagement which must decide the fortune of the campaign, no sooner learnt that the

French were preparing for open hostilities, than declaring that he would soon rid Piedmont of their presence, he began his march, and halting before Sommeriva, which was garrisoned only by a very small body of troops, he summoned it to surrender. In reply, the commandant of the fortress merely desired him to survey the heights in the immediate neighbourhood, which were bristling with armed men; but the marquis, who from the previous reluctance of M. d'Enghien believed that he had little to fear, nevertheless commenced an assault, which was, however, soon silenced by the French artillery.

Had d'Enghien at that moment availed himself of his advantage, and instead of resting satisfied with the preservation of Sommeriva, followed the advice of his officers, and immediately commenced the attack, he must have totally destroyed the body of troops by whom Del Guasto was accompanied; as it was subsequently ascertained that a large portion of his army were at a considerable distance in the rear, engaged in the extrication of the guns which had been swamped in a morass. Of this circumstance the French were not, however, aware, until it was too late; and the marquis, anxious to defer an engagement until he was joined by the whole of his troops, profited by their supineness to retire to Cerisola for the night.

Del Guasto had no sooner retreated than the prince was guilty of the serious error of abandoning the heights, which had hitherto rendered his position so advantageous; and in his turn retired to Carmagnola, leaving two hundred horsemen to observe the movements of the enemy.

It would appear that this duty was intrusted to a very inefficient officer; for it is certain that when on the following day the French were preparing to resume their ground, they discovered that it was already occupied by the imperialists, who had drawn up their army in readiness for the conflict, and who were at least one third stronger than themselves. The mortification of M. d'Enghien was intense; aware as he instantly became that his own imprudence had enabled Del Guasto to obtain this advantage. He had on the previous day refused to attack the imperialists, owing to his apprehension that the exhaustion of his troops, from the sudden heat of the weather, would militate against their success; but he had confidently calculated upon resuming his position, which he now saw wrested from him. Under the circumstances he had, however, no longer an alternative, for he felt that should he fall back once more upon Carmagnola his army would become disheartened; and he consequently resolved to attack the marquis at Cerisola on the following day.

The brave De Boutières had meanwhile no sooner ascertained that the prince was authorized to engage the enemy, than, forgetting his personal wrongs, he rejoined the army, and was put in command of the van-guard; the prince himself headed the main body; and Dampierre[1] was intrusted with the rear-guard; while Montluc, who

[1] M. de Dampierre, Seigneur de Clermont-Tonnerre, was the representative of an illustrious family in Dauphiny, which traced its descent from the 11th century; and the head of whose house had, until recently, borne the title of Count de Clermont and Dauphin d'Auvergne.

always coveted a post of danger, was thrown forward with a body of three thousand harquebussiers, as a forlorn hope, to meet the first attack of the enemy.

As the sun rose, the hostile armies faced each other, and the engagement commenced by a skirmish between the troops of the Gascon captain and a corresponding force of imperialists, which lasted from dawn until an hour before mid-day; Del Guasto being unwilling to abandon the heights, and his enemy equally reluctant to attack him at such a disadvantage. It was the object of each leader to take the other in flank, but both were sufficiently on their guard to render this manœuvre impracticable. The gallantry displayed by Montluc and his little band was conspicuous; and although from their exposed position many among them fell, they nevertheless retained their ground, and fought bravely until the very close of the engagement.

At length the two main bodies came to a charge, and the battle became general. D'Enghien throughout the day proved himself worthy of the trust which had been reposed in him; and although, as Montluc had evidently foreseen, the Italians proved almost useless during the combat, and the Gryérians fairly turned and fled without striking a blow when they saw the enemy with Del Guasto approaching to charge them, he was nevertheless enabled through his own gallantry and that of the French gendarmerie to break through the imperial ranks, and to force them back upon the neighbouring forest in such disorder, that they were cut to pieces on their retreat.

The Prince of Salerno had received express orders from the marquis not to quit the post assigned to him

on the left wing of the imperialists, nor to suffer the division under his command to take any part in the conflict until he received his permission to do so, however urgent circumstances might appear; and he obeyed these directions so implicitly, that when the tide of battle had carried Del Guasto to such a distance that he was unable to revoke them, he remained perfectly passive, although he was aware that his co-operation must have enabled the main body to rally, and thus possibly have changed the fortunes of the day; nor did he even commence his retreat until he felt that further delay must involve his own safety and that of his troops; when he effected the manœuvre so skilfully that he escaped with very little loss.

Thus a victory was secured to d'Enghien, for which he was in a great degree indebted to the injudicious measures of the enemy, but it was purchased by the sacrifice of many valuable lives; two of his own equerries and fifteen of his noble volunteers having perished during the charge; a casualty which was, however, counterbalanced by the fact that his total loss of rank and file amounted only to two hundred men.

The imperialists had, meanwhile, suffered much more severely. Del Guasto was himself struck in the knee by a musket-ball, and received a blow upon the head from a mace by which his helmet was crushed; and he found himself compelled from the anguish of his wounds to quit the field, and make the best of his way to Ast, with a troop of four hundred horse, which were all that remained to him. The repose which he so greatly needed, he was not, however, fated to find in what he had

trusted would have been to him a city of refuge. On marching from Ast to encounter the French army, he had arrogantly authorized the citizens to close their gates against him, should he return otherwise than as a conqueror; and they no sooner saw him approaching wounded and a fugitive, than they obeyed him to the very letter, and refused to admit him within their walls. He had, consequently, no alternative save to proceed to Milan; where, although shelter was conceded to him, he was bitterly taunted with his non-fulfilment of a promise which he had made to certain of the Milanese ladies, that he would bring the young French nobles who had joined the banner of M. d'Enghien as volunteers, in chains to their feet; a vaunt which it appeared was intended to be less empty than those in which he usually indulged; as it is asserted by more than one historian that chains and padlocks were found in considerable numbers among the captured baggage. So enraged, moreover, were the population of Milan by a defeat for which they had been totally unprepared, that during his recovery he found it expedient to live in close retirement, as he was pursued through the streets, whenever he ventured to appear in public, by the jeers and execrations of the mob; and the clamorous demands of an unhappy class of females for the handsome young cavaliers whom he had promised to march as his prisoners into their city.

These indignities, which were as gall and wormwood to the arrogant spirit of the marquis, sufficed to fill up the measure of his mortification; for never was defeat more disastrous than his own at Cerisola. Ten thousand of his best troops had fallen during the battle; the whole

of his artillery, ammunition, and baggage had become the prey of the enemy, as well as four thousand prisoners, among whom were several of his best officers. The costly armour, ponderous plate, and bulky treasure-chest by which he was always accompanied to the field, and which amounted in value to upwards of three hundred thousand crowns, shared the same fate; while the city of Carignano, and the whole marquisate of Montferrat, with the exception of Casal, were retaken by M. d'Enghien.

At this period, had the French king responded to the entreaties of the prince, and furnished him with a sufficient reinforcement, the Milanese must inevitably have fallen into his power; but the league into which the emperor had entered with Henry VIII, and their meditated descent upon France, rendered him not only unable to do so, but compelled him moreover to withdraw a force of twelve thousand men from the victorious army, for the defence of his own kingdom; a circumstance which decided the Count d'Enghien to consent to a truce for three months, which was proposed by Del Guasto. This had no sooner been ratified by their respective sovereigns, than the French prince reluctantly retired from Piedmont, and, after having strongly fortified all the fortresses of which he had possessed himself, marched his army back to France; while the imperialist general proceeded towards the frontiers of Picardy and Champagne, to assist in the attack which Charles was about to make upon those provinces.

By the messenger whom he despatched to the court to request supplies, M. d'Enghien forwarded to his sister,

the Duchess de Nevers,[1] a superb watch which had been found in the tent of the marquis, with directions to present it to the king; a commission of which she gracefully acquitted herself in the presence of the assembled courtiers.

"Sire;" she said, as bending upon one knee she tendered to him the costly trinket upon a small cushion of crimson velvet; "my brother d'Enghien having been unable to send you the Marquis del Guasto, thanks to the fleetness of his good horse, ventures to offer to you the watch of the fugitive imperialist; which, although perhaps in point of fact as valuable as its owner, did not chance to be so well mounted."

"I thank my good and brave cousin and lieutenant for the courtesy, Madame;" replied the king, as he accepted the jewel, and at the same time raised the duchess from her kneeling position; "and yourself no less. And I shall greatly value the offering, not only as a memorial of his valour, but also of your own wit and beauty."

Throughout the whole of that evening the *mot* of

[1] Marguerite de Bourbon, the sister of Antoine de Bourbon, Duke de Vendôme, afterwards King of Navarre, of François de Bourbon, Count d'Enghien, and of Louis, Prince de Condé, was the wife of François de Cleves, Duke de Nevers; who, at the age of five years, succeeded his father in the sovereignty of the counties of Auxerre, Nevers, Eu, and Rhétel, which had belonged to his family since the commencement of the fourteenth century. In 1538 he had been created duke and peer of France by Francis I; and under the reign of his successor he was appointed governor of Champagne, Brie, and Luxembourg. On his death in 1562, he left six children by his wife Marguerite de Bourbon.

Madame de Nevers afforded more conversation than the manœuvres of her successful kinsman. "

Nevertheless, the period was not one for idle jesting or empty frivolity. France was threatened to her very core. The emperor and the King of England had assembled a strong army upon the Rhine for the capture of Paris, which they had resolved to sack; and afterwards to lay the whole country waste to the banks of the Loire. The avowed object of the treaty into which they had entered was the entire conquest, and subsequent partition, of the kingdom between themselves; and they had even calculated with such security on success, that Normandy and Guyenne, with the title of King of France, were by the said treaty guaranteed to Henry, while Charles was to inherit the duchy of Burgundy and the northern provinces watered by the Somme.

The army with which Francis proposed to repel this threatened invasion was intrusted to the dauphin and d'Annebaut, but with the usual reservation that they should encamp on the banks of the Marne, and keeping that river between their own forces and those of the emperor, dispute the passage whenever it should be attempted; avoiding at all hazards a general engagement. Unfortunately for the king, he could not at this juncture calculate upon the slightest assistance from without, his allies having indignantly abandoned him from the moment that the fleet of Barbarossa had anchored off the coast of Provence; while their indignation had been still further excited by the outrages committed by the Turkish admiral on his departure from Toulon; when, not

content with devastating the surrounding country for the purpose of victualling his ships for their homeward voyage, he availed himself of the opportunity to carry off a number of the criminals from the arsenal to man his galleys; and some of the handsomest women of the province for his harem. Thus Francis could not venture to recal his Infidel allies even in the present perilous emergency; the hatred which they had engendered towards him, and the enormities of which they had been guilty even upon his own territories, having convinced him of the seriousness of his previous error.

The invading armies consisted of eighty thousand infantry and two thousand horse; and it had been agreed between the allied sovereigns that they should advance simultaneously upon Paris, without lingering by the way to lay siege to any of the intervening cities. Had they pursued this course they must at once have made themselves masters of the capital, where a panic terror and a great scarcity of troops would have rendered it impossible to offer any effectual resistance; but so great a jealousy still existed between the two allied potentates, that instead of honestly fulfilling the stipulations of their mutual contract, each determined to possess himself of the several fortresses which lay upon his route; and thus the unity of their action was destroyed.

Henry VIII. landed at Calais, accompanied by the Duke of Norfolk, and an army of thirty thousand men, with the pomp of a conqueror rather than the prudence of an invading general; and he was joined upon his arrival in that port by a force of fifteen thousand imperialists

under De Buren and De Rœux, who were to act in conjunction with his own troops. The emperor meanwhile pressed forward towards Champagne, whither Francis, who considered him as the more formidable enemy of the two, had, as we have shown, despatched the main body of his army; taking no further precaution against the English king than that of fortifying Boulogne and the other important fortresses of Picardy.

Charles commenced his operations by the siege of Luxembourg, which, contrary to the anticipations of the king, capitulated almost immediately; the garrison having suffered from famine throughout the whole of the preceding winter, and being reduced to a state of exhaustion which rendered them unable to oppose his attack. He then continued his onward march, making himself master as he advanced, of the citadels of Commerey on the Meuse, Ligny, and Brienne; after which, crossing the frontier of Champagne, he halted before St. Dizier, a place of great importance, inasmuch as it commanded the passage of the river.

Aware that its garrison was insignificant in number, its outworks very imperfectly fortified, and its position unfavourable for defence, Charles anticipated as easy a conquest of this city as that to which he had looked forward at Luxembourg. He was, however, fated to disappointment, the command having been confided to Louis de Beuil, Count de Sancerre, the lieutenant of the Duke d'Orleans, and to M. de Lalande, who had so greatly distinguished himself during the preceding year at the defence of Landrecies; and who, upon receiving a summons from the emperor to surrender, replied by

assuring him that there was not one traitor within the walls, and that if he coveted the place he must win it at the sword's point.

Irritated by this defiance, Charles V. at once sat down before the city, angry at an impediment which he considered gratuitous, and believing from day to day that the morrow must witness its reduction. Contrary, however, not only to his own expectations, but to those of Francis himself, the town resisted despite all its disadvantages, for the space of six weeks; during which time the garrison not only thwarted the operations of the imperialists, by continual sorties, but even sustained an assault which lasted for seven hours, and cost the emperor the lives of eight hundred of his best troops; while the remainder of his forces retreated in such disorder that they abandoned a great quantity of powder, which fell into the hands of the French. The loss on the side of the garrison did not amount to more than forty gendarmes and two hundred infantry; but the Count de Sancerre was grievously wounded in the face by the fragments of his sword, which was shivered by a shot. On the following day the emperor sent a herald to Sancerre, to offer him honourable terms if he would consent to capitulate; but the French general, who was aware of the importance of delaying the march of the enemy towards Paris, refused to admit the envoy within the walls, and declared his intention of still holding the city.

Convinced by this reply that he should obtain nothing from the fears of the count, and irritated by the loss of life which had already ensued, Charles resolved to starve

out the garrison, which he was aware was already driven to great straits both for food and ammunition; and he consequently remained passively in his camp, awaiting the result of this determination. A few days subsequently a drummer was despatched from the beleaguered city to propose the exchange of some prisoners; and he had no sooner delivered his message and left the enemy's lines, than a stranger, with an apparent amount of caution which disarmed suspicion, jostled him on his path, and at the same time thrust a sealed packet into his hand, which he hurriedly informed him he had received from the Duke de Guise, and was waiting an opportunity to convey to the Count de Sancerre. A look of intelligence was then exchanged between the two men; and in a few moments the mysterious packet was delivered. The letter was written in the cypher adopted by the duke, of which M. de Sancerre had the key; and so much was he astonished at the nature of its contents, that he at once called a council, and read it aloud.

In this missive Sancerre was enjoined to surrender the garrison upon the best terms he could make with the emperor, and that with all possible despatch, as it was found impossible to introduce either men or provisions into the city. Many of the officers intreated their commandant to disregard an order, which had merely emanated from the governor, and not from the king himself, alleging that they could but surrender when their means of subsistence and defence were utterly exhausted, and that meanwhile they were doing their sovereign good service by checking the onward march of the enemy. The majority, however, had become disheartened by the privations

and suffering which they had already endured, and strongly urged De Sancerre to immediate obedience. Yet, for a time, the count still hesitated; until his duty as a soldier at length overcame his pride as a man, and he consented to follow the directions of his superior officer. He therefore despatched in his turn a herald to the imperial camp, demanding to know upon what conditions he would be permitted to evacuate the fortress, should he consent to capitulate. These were immediately detailed, and were of the harshest description; the emperor declaring that M. de Sancerre had forfeited all claim to the lenity which he had previously determined to exert towards him, by an obstinacy as weak as it was unavailing. He had, however, miscalculated the nature of the count, who at once peremptorily refused to accede to the terms proposed; and Charles at length reluctantly consented to permit the garrison to retain the fortress for the space of twelve days longer, when, if they did not receive succour from without, they were to be allowed to vacate the place at mid-day with all the honours of war, carrying with them the whole of their baggage and a portion of their artillery. The order which had been transmitted to him, and the death of M. de Lalande, who was killed during the assault, combined with the total exhaustion of his ammunition, determined Sancerre to comply with these conditions; and, accordingly, on the appointed day, not having in the interval received the help on which he had still ventured to rely, he vacated the city, which was immediately garrisoned by the imperialists.

This protracted struggle had, however, very much exhausted the forces of the emperor; and it had also

cost the life, among others, of Réné de Nassau, Prince of Orange, one of his favourite generals, who fell on the same day as M. de Lalande, to the regret of the whole army, to whom his courage and affability had greatly endeared him.

The intelligence of the surrender of St. Dizier affected Francis more deeply than any loss which he had previously sustained, it being the last formidable impediment to Charles's advance on Paris. At the moment when it reached him he was confined to his bed by indisposition; and the despatches were delivered to him in the presence of the Queen of Navarre, Madame d'Etampes, and other ladies of the court who were assembled in his chamber for the purpose of beguiling his hours of enforced inaction. "Oh, my God!" he exclaimed when he had finished their perusal; "how dearly dost Thou make me pay for a kingdom which I had believed was freely given. Nevertheless, Thy will be done." Then turning to his sister he said sadly; "*Ma mignonne*, I entreat of you to attend *complines* at the cathedral, and to pray to God for me, that even should it be His will to support and favour the emperor more than myself, He may at least spare me the misery of seeing him encamped before the capital of my kingdom; and of having it placed on record that my rebellious vassal defied me to my beard, as his ancestor the Duke de Burgogne formerly defied Louis XI. Come what may, however, I am resolved to meet him and give him battle; and I pray God that I may die rather than be condemned to become a second time his prisoner."

Two days subsequently he appeared in public in the

midst of the panic-stricken citizens, whom he endeavoured to reassure by the calm fearlessness of his own deportment. "Remember, my faithful burghers;" he said, as they crowded about him with loud cries of terror and distress; "Remember, that although I may protect you from all harm, I cannot preserve you from fear, for God holds the hearts of men in His hand. You must strive therefore to do your duty as I shall do mine."

These were brave words, and worthy the sovereign of a great nation, but unfortunately they were only lip-deep. The court intrigues, to which frequent allusion has already been made, had at this period attained to such a height, that plots and counterplots were perpetually circumventing the most prudent public measures. As Madame d'Etampes saw the king daily becoming more feeble, she began to tremble at the consequences which his death must inevitably entail upon herself; and although she cared little for the Duke d'Orleans personally, she determined to exert all her energies to induce Francis to accept the former proposition of the emperor, and to marry him to the Princess of Spain, in order that she might herself secure a safe asylum, either in the duchy of Milan or the Low Countries, after the demise of her royal lover.

This alliance would, moreover, as she was well aware, mortify the pride of Diane de Poitiers, by placing the younger prince in a position as advantageous as that of the dauphin; and accordingly in pursuance of this resolution, she urged Francis to terminate the war by an alliance for which, as she assured him, the emperor was still anxious. The stipulation made by Charles,

however, that the ceded territory should never be united to the French crown, induced the king to persist in his refusal; and she no sooner found that her influence was on the wane, than she determined to effect her purpose by other and less unexceptionable means. We have already stated that Bossut, Count de Longueval, was at once her lover and her slave; and, through his agency, she entered into a treasonable correspondence with Charles, to whom she communicated the most secret decisions of the council. The first-fruits of her infamous and selfish treachery were the loss of St. Dizier; the supposititious order of the Duke de Guise having been written by the imperial chancellor Granvella, to whom she had communicated the secret of his cypher.

From St. Dizier Charles wrote to apprise the English king that he was about to march forthwith upon Paris; but Henry, who had no sooner ascertained that his ally had taken Luxembourg than he determined to follow his example, drily replied by an assurance that he should not follow until he had possessed himself of Boulogne and Montreuil; the former of which places he had already invested in person with a force of twenty thousand men, while the Duke of Norfolk menaced the latter with the remainder of the English troops, and the Flemish forces of De Buren and De Rœux.

The emperor, indignant at this selfish policy, which, although he had considered it legitimate on his own part, he condemned as a breach of faith upon that of his coadjutor, retorted by requesting that since such was the case, and that his army was seriously weakened by a delay which he had not foreseen, he might be permitted

to save his honour by demanding a truce. To this request Henry, bent upon the conquests which he meditated, offered no opposition; declaring to those about him that he was quite strong enough to carry out his measures without extraneous aid; and thenceforward the two potentates ceased altogether to act in concert.

CHAPTER XIX.

[1544-45.]

EFFECTS OF THE RESISTANCE OF ST. DIZIER—CHARLES V. ENDEAVOURS TO EFFECT A PEACE—THE QUEEN AND MADAME D'ETAMPES INDUCE THE KING TO ENTER INTO A NEGOTIATION WITH THE EMPEROR—THE DAUPHIN DEMANDS THE RECALL OF MONTMORENCI—THE COUNT DE FURSTEMBERG IS MADE PRISONER BY THE FRENCH—CHARLES V. DETERMINES ON A RETREAT TO THE LOW COUNTRIES—MADAME D'ETAMPES ENABLES HIM TO POSSESS HIMSELF OF EPERNAY AND CHÂTEAU-THIERRY—ALARM OF THE PARISIANS—PRUDENT MEASURES OF THE DAUPHIN—HENRY VIII. TAKES BOULOGNE—FRANCIS CONCLUDES A TREATY WITH THE EMPEROR—THE NEGOTIATION OF MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE DUKE D'ORLEANS AND THE DAUGHTER OF THE EMPEROR IS RENEWED—DISCONTENT OF THE DAUPHIN—HE PROTESTS AGAINST THE TREATY—THE FRENCH ARMY MARCHES INTO PICARDY—THE DAUPHIN MAKES A NIGHT-ATTACK UPON BOULOGNE—THE FRENCH ARE REPULSED—GALLANTRY OF MONTLUC—TERMINATION OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1544—THE EMPEROR RESOLVES TO SUPPRESS THE LEAGUE OF SMALKALDEN—CHARLES V. DETERMINES TO BESTOW THE HAND OF HIS DAUGHTER UPON THE DUKE D'ORLEANS—THE EMPEROR ENDEAVOURS TO CONCILIATE THE POPE—PERSECUTION OF THE FLEMISH REFORMERS—MASSACRE OF THE VAUDOIS—IMPRUDENCE OF THE DAUPHIN—A COURT BANQUET—DISGRACE OF THE DAUPHIN—FRANCIS RAISES A NAVAL ARMAMENT AGAINST ENGLAND—HE SENDS SUCCOUR TO THE DOWAGER-QUEEN OF SCOTLAND—AN ARMY IS DESPATCHED TO PICARDY—THE BANQUET ON BOARD THE CARRAGNON—D'ANNEBAUT SAILS WITH THE FRENCH FLEET—OPERATIONS ON THE ENGLISH COAST—THE FRENCH LAND IN SUSSEX—DESTROY BRIGHTON, AND NEW HAVEN—AND TAKE POSSESSION OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT—THE FRENCH FLEET RETURNS TO HAVRE.

CHAPTER XIX.

[1544-45.]

THE emperor meanwhile pursued the course of the Marne, and advanced so far into the province of Champagne that he found himself closely pressed by the troops of the dauphin, who cut off all his supplies, and threatened his army with famine. The noble defence of St. Dizier, had notwithstanding the apprehensions of the king, proved the salvation of France, by affording time on the one hand for the better organization of her army, and on the other by harassing and exhausting that of the enemy; but the most important of its results was the coolness and jealousy which it had produced between Charles and the English king; the refusal of Henry VIII. to march upon Paris, when he was apprised by the emperor of his own intention of proceeding thither, having convinced Charles that he must not calculate upon that blind deference to his wishes which he had led himself to expect from his equally arrogant ally; and, accordingly, while he resolved to advance unsupported, in order to impress upon Francis the peril to which he would expose himself by

persisting in hostilities, he seconded the views of Madame d'Etampes by declaring to several French officers whom he had made prisoners, that so far from seeking to provoke a war, he was ready to effect a reconciliation with their sovereign; and at the same period a Spanish monk, of the order of St. Dominic, who was the confessor of Queen Eleonora, entered, by her commands, into a correspondence to this effect with Martin de Gusman,[1] who held a similar office about the emperor.

Granvella, his chancellor, strongly urged him to a reconciliation; and he was the more inclined to such a measure, as the protracted resistance of St. Dizier, under the most unfavourable circumstances, had sufficed to convince him that his meditated campaign presented more difficulties than he was either prepared, or enabled, at that particular moment, to surmount. On the other hand, both the queen and the favourite, although from very different motives, laboured to convince Francis of the impolicy of permitting the emperor to approach nearer to the capital, where the impossibility of effecting a safe retreat in the event of defeat would render the imperialist army desperate, and involve the whole country in bloodshed and ruin; while their success would equally prove the destruction of his kingdom.

[1] Martin de Gusman was a Dominican friar, to whom, upon an occasion when he had permitted himself to indulge in some disrespectful expressions regarding Francis I, M. de Neuilly, at that period the French ambassador in Spain, publicly gave a blow upon the mouth; a vehemence by which he deprived himself of the dignity of chancellor which subsequently became vacant, and which was destined for him; the Cardinal de Tournon representing to the king that a man who could not control his temper was unfit to become either a magistrate or a judge.

At length a conference between the representatives of the two powers was opened at La Chaussée, a small village midway between Vitry and Châlons; but although it was admitted by all parties that the war must prove unprofitable to both potentates, and that a general peace was desirable for the welfare of Europe, they separated without having effected any definitive arrangement.

During this negotiation, and, beyond all doubt, with the intention of alarming Francis into a compliance with the conditions upon which he had consented to forego all further hostilities, the emperor continued his onward march until he reached Châlons; where the Duke de Nevers, who held the city, immediately prepared for a siege. Charles V. however, who had received sure intelligence of the great strength of the garrison, continued his march without evincing any intention of attacking the fortress, to the extreme annoyance of the prince and his officers; and the disappointment so enraged several young nobles of the suite of the Duke de Nevers who had thrown themselves into the place, that they made a sudden sortie, and commenced a skirmish with the rear-guard of the imperialists, by which imprudence they all sacrificed their lives; the German cavalry having a short time previously been armed with pistols, a fact of which their enemies were not aware.

The position of the dauphin became daily more difficult; as, in order to avoid an engagement, he was compelled to retreat as the emperor advanced; and consequently, to fall back so closely upon the troops of Henry VIII, that a few forced marches would have

enabled them to attack him in the rear. He had, moreover, lost all confidence in d'Annebaut, and urged the king, in this extremity, to permit the recal of Montmorenci; but Francis was still too much exasperated against him to consent to such an arrangement; a fact of which Madame d'Etampes was well aware, and by which she so skilfully profited as to secure d'Annebaut in his post, and thus deliver herself from the peril to which she must have been exposed, had she been compelled to exchange a fast friend for a watchful enemy during her secret negotiations with the emperor.

As the imperialists had ere long discovered that the dauphin, whom they were aware was constitutionally brave, must be acting under stringent orders thus to suffer them to approach the capital unmolested, they resolved, if possible, to compel him to give them battle before the rapid exhaustion of their provisions forced them to an ignoble and dangerous retreat; and Count Guillaume de Furstemberg, who had during his service in the French army made himself intimately acquainted with the surrounding country, volunteered to point out to his new master a ford a little below the town, by which the troops might pass the river, and turning the flank of the dauphin's forces, render an engagement inevitable. Anxious, however, not to fail in his promise, he resolved to attempt it himself during the night with a few followers; a purpose which he effected in safety, and he was about to return and report his success to the emperor, when the advanced guard of the French suddenly surrounded his party, the whole of whom they either killed or made prisoners. The renegade count

was among the captives; and so exasperated were those by whom he was taken, that they assailed him with the most violent invectives, and he was forthwith conveyed under an escort to Paris, where he was committed to the Bastille.

This disappointment proved the more serious to Charles that his army was beginning to suffer seriously from want; the dauphin having laid waste the country on both banks of the Marne, after he had filled the storehouses of Epernay and Château-Thierry for the supply of his own troops; and, thus convinced of the failure of his enterprise, the emperor authorized Gusman secretly to pursue the negotiation which had been commenced at La Chaussée; after which, as a last resource, and still with the same view of compelling a peace, he resumed his march along the river, although uncertain how long he should be able to subsist his troops.

He was not suffered, however, to remain in doubt upon this important point, for the Duchess d'Etampes no sooner ascertained the jeopardy in which he was placed, than, apprehending that the retreat of the emperor to the Low Countries must at once destroy all hope of the alliance which she was eager to forward, she desired de Longueval to inform him that she could give him information which would enable him to possess himself both of Epernay and Château-Thierry, and thus readily to victual his army. Charles at once accepted the offer, assuring the treacherous duchess that he would in requital of so signal a service pledge himself to second her own projects regarding the marriage of the Duke d'Orleans; upon which Jean de Bossut, by a heavy

bribe, induced the captain who was intrusted with the destruction of the bridge of Epernay, by which the dauphin had designed to prevent the entrance of the enemy into the town, to delay the performance of his duty for so long a period that it afforded Charles sufficient time to attack the outpost, to force his way across, and to take possession of both places.

The consternation of the Parisians when they became assured that the imperialists were actually in Château-Thierry, and that they had even thrown their outposts forward to Meaux, exceeded all precedent; nor could the wise precautions taken by the dauphin serve to allay them. Immediately upon the surprise of the two important posts which had thus been wrested from him by treachery, he had despatched a force of nearly eight thousand men to occupy that city; while Charles, who was now at ease as regarded the subsistence of his army, did not again attempt to cross the Marne, but abandoning the course of the river, proceeded to Villars-Cotterets, and thence to the town of Soissons, which he delivered over to pillage for the space of three days.

The panic in the capital remained at its acme. The most opulent of the citizens fled to Rouen and Orleans for safety, carrying with them all the movable portion of their property; and the different roads were covered with wagons filled with household goods, women, and children, while equipages of every description threaded their way among the more cumbrous vehicles; and bands of robbers, to whom every public disorder affords a harvest, rifled the fugitives as they endeavoured to escape with the wreck of their fortunes.

In this season of individual peril all national pride and all sense of loyalty were alike forgotten. In vain did the king send the Duke de Guise to reassure the inhabitants, and subsequently attempted the same unprofitable errand himself; they were alike unheeded; and at that precise moment Francis received intelligence that Boulogne had capitulated, and that Henry VIII. was, in his turn, marching upon Paris. This information at once determined the measures of the king. D'Annebaut had already arrived with the conditions of the emperor, which he had previously resolved to reject; but fearing that Charles might become even more unreasonable in his demands should he learn the recent success of the English monarch, he hastened to conclude the treaty; and once more the maréchal was despatched to Brussels by express to procure the signature of Charles, whom he found on his arrival suffering severely from an attack of gout. Having received express injunctions not to return without having effected his mission, he however ventured to urge its immediate accomplishment, notwithstanding the undisguised reluctance of the emperor, when the latter said with considerable irritation of manner, as he took the pen which had been prepared for him between his swollen fingers; "You are pressing, M. le Maréchal; but I pray you to observe from what you now see that I am not likely to forfeit the pledge which I have given, as he who cannot hold a pen in time of peace would be little able to wield a sword in the hour of battle."

"Sire;" was the immediate and pertinent reply of d'Annebaut, accompanied, however, by a profound obeisance; "it is scarcely to be anticipated that your imperial majesty will be for ever afflicted with the gout."

The universal satisfaction evinced throughout France on the conclusion of the new treaty, was, however, premature; for although wearied of a war which had impoverished their cities, devastated their provinces, and involved an enormous sacrifice of life, the unfortunate subjects of Francis I. had merely purchased a temporary tranquillity by a more threatening danger than even that from which they were thus delivered. The principal articles of the treaty set forth that "within the space of two years the emperor should bestow the hand of his daughter, or that of his niece, according to his own pleasure, upon the Duke d'Orleans; with either the Milanese, or the Low Countries and the counties of Bourgogne and Charolois as her dowry, also at his own option. Should he decide upon thus ceding the Milanese, moreover, he was to retain the citadels of Milan and Cremorna until the princess should have male issue; while Francis was to resign his claim alike to the kingdom of Naples and the Milanese duchy, should he determine to endow the duke with the Low Countries; and moreover restore all the territories of the Duke de Savoie, although he was permitted to retain his fortresses until the emperor relinquished those of Milan and Cremorna, save such as had been taken since the truce of Nice, which were to be at once given up on both sides, as well as all those which had been taken in France and the Low Countries."

This treaty, however advantageous it was likely to prove to the Duke d'Orleans, was one by which France as a nation was at once weakened and endangered; and the dauphin accordingly protested strongly against its

acceptance. It aggrandized his brother at his expense, and dismembered the kingdom which he regarded as his just inheritance. Rather, as he declared, would he still trust to the force of arms, than consent to a concession by which he was humiliated, and which threatened to involve the nation in anarchy; but his representations were disregarded; the king, failing in health, with all his energies depressed, and surrounded by advisers who from private interests or public policy were anxious to secure a termination of the war, treated his arguments with a cold and resolute indifference which convinced him that further opposition would be useless; and, accordingly, he signed a solemn protest against it at Fontainebleau on the 12th of December, in the presence of the Duke de Vendôme, the Count d'Enghien, and the Count d'Aumale, afterwards Duke de Guise; a ceremony which although common at the time could be of little effect.

The treaty had no sooner been concluded by the two contracting parties at Crespy, on the 18th of September, than the emperor despatched an order to De Buren and De Rœux, who were assisting the English in the siege of Montreuil, to disband their troops and retire; while the Duke d'Orleans, the Cardinals of Lorraine and Meudon, and several nobles of high rank, proceeded to join Charles at Brussels, where they were to remain as hostages until the fortresses designated by the treaty were evacuated; the Maréchal d'Annebaut was also despatched to Brussels, and the dauphin marched to the relief of Montreuil, greatly to the chagrin of Henry VIII, who was vigorously besieging that city; but who, abandoned by his

German allies, and unable to resist so powerful an army as that now brought against him, raised the siege, threw a strong garrison into Boulogne, and retreated with the remainder of his forces to Calais, where he at once embarked for England. He moreover retired in such haste, that although he had left a large body of troops to defend the city, he had not organized any plan by which that defence might be assured; the principal portion of his artillery was still planted outside the walls, and all his military stores remained in the lower town, which was rendered imminently unsafe by the numerous breaches that had induced the besieged to abandon it, and to retire into the upper portion of the place, where they were covered by the citadel.

The dauphin, apprised of this negligence, determined to hazard a night attack, for the double purpose of recovering the town, and securing the stores which were housed in its magazines. Placing himself at the head of a few companies of infantry, the whole of whom by his orders wore their shirts over their uniforms that they might be enabled to recognise each other in the darkness, he accordingly directed M. de Tais, his second in command, to march in profound silence towards the breaches in the walls of the lower town, which were defended only by a slender guard; while M. de Dampierre advanced upon the tower on the sea-shore with his corps of Grisons.

M. de Tais readily effected his entrance into the place, by overpowering the few troops who were there stationed; but he was unfortunately so severely wounded during the attack that he was compelled to retire to the camp; upon which the French troops, although already in pos-

session of the town, finding themselves without a leader, and being informed that the English were about to make a sortie, and to repossess themselves of the breaches in order to intercept their retreat, became so terrified that they began to fly in the utmost confusion; nor could all the efforts of their other officers, among whom was the brave Montluc, succeed in inducing them to rally and hold their ground. Day was beginning to dawn when the place was abandoned, and Montluc was the last to pass the walls, with three arrows in his buckler and one in the sleeve of his coat-of-mail; declaring as he rejoined his friends that he bore about him all the booty that he had made at Boulogne. Immediately afterwards the fugitives were met by a strong force of lansquenets under d'Annebaut who was advancing to their assistance, but it was already too late; and the dauphin having strengthened the garrison of Montreuil as a check upon its threatening neighbour, the campaign terminated for the winter.

The war which was thus closed, inglorious as it had proved to both sovereigns, had, nevertheless, been a source of immense suffering to the French people. The peasantry had been oppressed and outraged alternately by friends and enemies; their cattle had been slaughtered, their grain cut down before it ripened, their houses pillaged, their wives and daughters insulted, and the provinces of Champagne and Picardy, once so abundant in produce of every description, laid waste, and the cities abandoned; while even many of the nobles, who had hitherto lived in affluence, were compelled to quit their

devastated estates, and to throw themselves upon the charity of those who had escaped a similar ruin.

The emperor, on quitting France, had disbanded a large portion of his army, but he had retained his most efficient force, and quartered all his Spanish troops in Lorraine. He had abandoned all further projects against the Infidels, and he was weary of making war against Francis, terminating, as it ever did, in new treaties, which each in turn disregarded when such a breach of faith suited his policy. Still he was unwilling to remain in inaction; and once more he resolved to humble the pretensions of the Protestant princes, whose partial independence he regarded as an affront to his own dignity.

Meanwhile his affection for the Duke d'Orleans increased daily; the lively, frank, and fearless disposition of the young prince amused his leisure, and diverted his hours of suffering; while his undisguised ambition, and the jealousy which he evinced of his elder brother, only the more tended to increase his favour. Charles had already resolved to give him the hand of his daughter; but, at the suggestion of the duke himself, he addressed a letter to Francis, in which he affirmed his intention of marrying him to his niece, unless the king should consent to increase his appanage in France, which, by the treaty of Crespy, amounted only to a hundred thousand annual livres. Francis, as had ever been the fashion with both monarchs, made no definitive reply to this demand, but deferred his decision until the period of the projected alliance should have arrived; and the emperor, absorbed by his newly-awakened hatred of the Reformers, forbore on his side to urge him further upon the subject.

The emperor was eager to pursue his persecution of the Smalkalden league, and to compel the princes to submit once more to the dominion of the Roman Church, in order to secure at the same time his own supremacy, and to conciliate the favour of the pope, which he had forfeited by his alliance with Henry VIII. The pontiff had evinced his displeasure by convoking, without his concurrence, the council of Trent, which reversed the *interim* granted by Charles to the Protestants, while at the same time he openly declared that Francis had conferred a greater benefit upon Christendom by his persecution of the heretics, than injury by his momentary alliance with the Infidels. He had, moreover, addressed a caustic letter to the emperor, in which he advised him to refer to himself all the ecclesiastical questions in which he had hitherto permitted his imperial diets to intermeddle; declaring that he alone was competent to decide them, and threatening him with his vengeance should he disobey.

As this precise measure was at the moment that which appeared the best calculated to assist his own projects, Charles, instead of resenting the haughtiness of the pontiff, commanded all his subjects in the Low Countries to obey, on peril of their lives, the bull which had been issued, and immediately to discontinue the practices of their religion; but the Lutherans, although they dared no longer worship in public as they had for some time been permitted to do, would not so lightly abandon the faith they had adopted; nor was it long ere Charles ascertained that the inhabitants of Tournay had summoned to their city a celebrated French preacher, called Pierre du Breuil, who was accustomed to perform the reformed service

secretly; upon which he caused him to be arrested as he was returning from the ramparts, and burnt him by a slow fire in the great square on the 19th of February.

This fearful example aroused the jealousy of the French king, who, anxious not to be surpassed in zeal for the Church by a monarch who had already injured him in the opinion of all the Romanist princes by his crusades against the Infidels, determined, in his turn, to strike a decisive blow which should reinstate him in their esteem, by exceeding the efforts then making by his rival.

After the frightful religious persecution of the 11th century, by which the Albigenses were exterminated, a few of the Vaudois, who had succeeded in effecting their escape, had concealed themselves in the narrowest and most secluded valleys of the Alps, where, by their exemplary industry and peaceful demeanour, they had so much ingratiated themselves with the surrounding nobles, that they were permitted to pursue their agrarian avocations unmolested. Thus they had in time greatly increased in numbers, and while the rest of Europe was engaged in war, they had quietly reared their crops, tended their herds, and made many a hitherto barren spot smile with vegetation. Their life was a purely pastoral one; and, although occasionally disturbed by some passing persecution, they relied so implicitly upon the privilege accorded to them by Louis XII, who—having compelled them to declare their submission to the Church of Rome, granted them free permission to remain unmolested in their mountain-fastnesses—that they had toiled and prospered, spreading themselves by degrees along the range of the Alps, and occupying some of the highest points above the marquisate of Saluzzo. Subsequently their agricul-

tural skill became so greatly appreciated that they were, towards the close of the thirteenth century, put into possession of a confined and desert district to the north of the Durance; and there they had during nearly three centuries made their abode, converting the waste into a smiling garden, and peopling the adjacent heights with innumerable flocks and herds.

This prosperity, calm and patriarchal as it was, however, excited the envy and malevolence of their Romanist neighbours. Their territory, which extended from the foot of the Alps to the district of Venaissan, contained two towns, those of Mérindol and Cabrières, and about thirty villages; while midway between the towns stood the borough of Oppède, which belonged to the Baron Jean Meynier, president of the parliament of Provence, and was entirely inhabited by Roman Catholics, which faith he himself professed.

It unfortunately happened at the period to which we must now return, (1545,) that one of the vassals of De Meynier, having incurred a heavy debt to his rigorous master which he was unable to liquidate, left his home stealthily, and fled for security to Cabrières; a fact which the baron no sooner ascertained, than, determined to avail himself of so favourable an opportunity of persecuting his detested neighbours, he hastened to apprise the king that the whole district was in a state of revolt, and that it was apprehended the Reformers had formed a plot to possess themselves of Marseilles.

Francis made no effort to assure himself of the truth of this statement, but at once authorized De Meynier to put in force the decree promulgated against the Vaudois

in 1540, during his first persecution of the professors of the reformed religion; a decree which had consigned all the heads of families to the flames, their wives and children to slavery, their property to confiscation, and their habitations to demolition. This iniquitous sentence had, however, been remitted at the entreaty of Du Bellay-Langei, who, after having made a survey of the little colony, convinced the king of their usefulness and love of order; upon which, moved by his representation, and about to enter into a new war in which these border-allies might probably prove serviceable, Francis had consented to revoke the edict; and, by a declaration addressed to the parliament of Aix, pardoned the Vaudois all their past errors, and accorded to them a period of three months, at the termination of which they were called upon to recant them.

In reply to this summons the Vaudois forwarded to the king a written confession of their faith, humbly entreating that he would point out the errors which they were thus commanded to abjure; but, although no attention was vouchsafed to their appeal, they had since been suffered to remain unmolested.

Now, however, the cessation of hostilities, and the mutual engagement of the emperor and the French king to exterminate all heresy throughout their respective dominions, had rendered his frontier-towns of comparatively small importance to Francis; and he resolved, although Charles had once more taken the initiative, and that the pyres had been already lighted in Belgium, that he too would purchase his salvation by the same means. Unhappily for the victims whom he had resolved to

immolate, he was again prostrated by a relapse of the malady to which he had long been a victim; and the Cardinal de Tournon, while entreating him to make his peace with God lest he should not survive the attack, assured him that he could not more effectually do so than by persisting in so pious an intention. The Archbishop of Arles, the Bishop of Aix, and sundry other ecclesiastics who were then assembled at Avignon, seconded the efforts of the cardinal, by conjuring him to revoke the amnesty which he had granted to the heretical Vaudois; and thus, even had he subsequently repented the barbarous order which he had caused to be transmitted to De Meynier, the hourly-increasing superstition of Francis, which always displayed itself under a fear of approaching death, hardened his heart against every thought of mercy; and the secret preparations of the vindictive baron were continued with a caution and celerity which blinded the wretched Lutherans to their danger, even when it had reached their very thresholds; nor was it until he issued an order that all individuals who were capable of bearing arms throughout the province should immediately assemble, well provided with food and weapons for an expedition which was not explained, that they were awakened to a sense of their peril.

The fated victims of selfish bigotry immediately despatched messengers to inform the Lutheran princes and the Protestant cantons of Switzerland of the jeopardy in which they were placed, and to entreat their assistance; and their co-religionists lost no time in forwarding a deputation to the king, which was commissioned to implore his clemency for the poor mountaineers, and to petition that they might still be permitted to retain their

liberty of conscience; offering, moreover, themselves to become sureties, that, should he be prevailed upon to spare them, they would never in any way endeavour to disturb the tranquillity of the state.

Francis received the deputies, who were introduced into his sick-room, with great haughtiness; and the sole reply which he vouchsafed was to the effect, that, as he never interfered with the national legislature of those whom they represented, he begged of them not to intermeddle in his own.

The levies which, by virtue of his office, De Meynier was authorized to make for the public service, joined to the local militia thus raised, formed a considerable force; which was augmented by a troop of horse under Iscalin, who had been recently created Baron de la Garde, and whose services in Italy had rendered both himself and his men callous to human suffering, and intolerant to all who rejected the Romish tenets. Nor had De Meynier failed to inform the popish legate, Antonio Trivulzio, of the proposed campaign; and from him he received a further reinforcement of a thousand foot-soldiers and several pieces of artillery.

The soul sickens at the record of the foul butcheries committed by this horde of legalized assassins. As they advanced towards the nearer villages the inhabitants fled in terror to the mountains, leaving their habitations to be burned, and their flocks and herds to become the prey of the spoilers; those who from bodily weakness could not effect their escape, were cut down; and soon the flames which ascended to the sky on all sides spread the alarm in the more distant parts of the district. In like manner the other hamlets were consecutively abandoned, pillaged,

and finally burnt, as well as the corn-stores, and such trees as would ignite. No resistance was offered; the miserable victims, unprepared for such an attack, sought only to save themselves by flight; and on the following morning De Meynier divided his troops into two bodies, one of which pursued the mountain road, while the other followed the course of the river. The carnage that ensued was frightful; many of the fugitives were encumbered either by children of tender years, or by aged parents, to whom they clung even in their despair; and all these perished miserably. Neither age nor sex proved a protection; and horrors were committed in the face of day which cried aloud to heaven for vengeance.

Thus was this army of extermination engaged until the 18th, when it reached Mirandola; but the once flourishing town, although it had so recently been warm with life, was totally abandoned, save by a poor idiot, who, while wandering through the deserted streets, was seized, bound to an olive tree, and shot. At Cabrières, on the morrow, the royal army, which was to secure the salvation of its sovereign, found sixty men and half the number of women, who, still trusting that they might save themselves from the general slaughter, made a show of resistance, and then offered to capitulate. The proposal was accepted, and they were assured that their lives would be respected; but they had no sooner delivered up the town, than they were informed that no terms could be kept with heretics, and they were one and all put to death.

Nor did those who had escaped from the city fail to become in their turn the prey of the still unsated bar-

barians. Eight hundred of the male inhabitants perished by the weapons of their remorseles enemies; while the women were, by the orders of De Meynier himself, shut up in a barn which was fired from without; and whenever a poor tortured wretch strove to save herself from the flames by leaping through the solitary window, she was immediately transfixed by a pike, and hurled back upon the reeking pile.

Suffice it, that before the work of death was finally accomplished, three thousand persons had shared the common fate, while a yet greater number were still wandering in the woods and among the fastnesses of the mountains; but the agents of murder were soon upon their track, and they also successively fell into the hands of De Meynier, who selected from among them six hundred and seventy of the younger and more vigorous, whom he consigned to the galleys, where they perished miserably within a few weeks. Upwards of two hundred and fifty others, after having been subjected to the mockery of a trial as heretics and traitors, were executed; and, finally, a proclamation was made that all individuals convicted of harbouring those who were still at large, should suffer death; a threat which so terrified the few who might have possessed sufficient humanity to afford shelter to the miserable fugitives, that they closed their hearts and their homes against them; and with the exception of a mere remnant, who succeeded in effecting their escape to Geneva and the Swiss territories, all ultimately died from famine. Twenty-two towns and villages were annihilated; such crops and timber as could not be destroyed by fire, were torn up by the roots; and

the flourishing district which had been for so long a period the garden of Provence, was in a few short days converted into a desert and unpeopled waste.

With the exception of a few of the more bigoted of the priesthood, all Christendom concurred in regarding this wholesale and unprovoked butchery of an inoffensive population with undisguised and genuine horror; but Francis, whose increasing infirmities rendered him more than ever anxious to conciliate the Church, and who weakly imagined that he was doing it good service by exterminating its enemies with a zeal even greater than that of the emperor himself, subsequently (on the 18th of August) registered his approval of the carnage, declaring that the Vaudois had only received a fitting chastisement for their obstinate heresy.

It was precisely at this period that the dauphin committed an act of imprudence which strengthened the jealousy and dislike that the king had long evinced towards him. While his paternal ambition was flattered by the brilliant alliance about to be contracted by the younger prince, (an alliance which promised to place him upon a throne little inferior to that of France,) and his vanity was soothed by the conviction that the same qualities which in himself had excited the jealousy of the emperor in his youth, had tended to attract him in his more mature years to the Duke d'Orleans; he gloomily remembered that the dauphin had neither aggrandized the dignity of the crown by his espousals with Catherine de' Medici, nor increased the glory of the nation by his arms. The open and ardent nature of the Prince Charles, moreover, which responded to that of his father, had led him to evince towards the king an affection and

gratitude which were never exhibited by the dauphin; who, long habituated to consider himself as an object of suspicion and distrust, retorted the injustice by augmented reserve and indifference. The personal court of the king was the chosen resort of the younger prince, and many of his closest friends were members of his father's household; whereas the dauphin formed a circle of his own, wherein figured all the friends and adherents of the exiled Montmorenci.

It was when surrounded by these favourite nobles that he was betrayed into the imprudence to which allusion has been made. The banquet to which he had bidden them was nearly at its close, and the potent Hungary wine, which had been lavishly supplied to the guests, had heated more than one brain, and quickened more than one pulse. The conversation of the party had turned upon the future; and the dauphin, believing himself to be surrounded by none but friends, began to explain his intentions so soon as he should have succeeded to the crown; and, finally, he declared to each the office which he had determined to confer upon him.

So interesting was the conversation to all parties, that no one observed the presence of Briandas, a buffoon of the court, who, however vacantly he affected to look around him, gathered up every sentence of this premature and ill-chosen discussion. Seated in the deep recess of a bay-window, and perfectly motionless, he retained his station until a chorus of acknowledgments from the assembled guests convinced him that he had better retire as unobtrusively as he had entered. When convinced that he had heard all, he accordingly withdrew, and at once proceeded to the apartments of the king.

"God help you, François de Valois;" he said abruptly, as he approached the divan upon which the monarch lay, and indulged in a shrill and sardonic laugh, which implied more of sarcasm than of merriment.

"How now, Briandas;" exclaimed the king somewhat sharply; "who has taught you this lesson?"

"What matters it?" asked the buffoon in reply; "You are no longer King of France; I have just seen it proved; and you, M. de Thais, who believe yourself to be grand-master of the artillery, you are deceived; Brissac holds that rank; and you too, who stand so proudly beside the sick-couch, you are not as you suppose the first-chamberlain; Saint-André has the appointment." Thus, with a bitter chuckle, he transferred all the great offices of the court; after which, once more addressing the astonished king, he added; "On the faith of a fool, Francis, you will soon see the Connétable de Montmorenci back once more, who will rule you with a rod of iron, and teach you never again to play the madman. Fly while you can; I renounce you; you are dead."

"Inform me instantly of your meaning, sirrah, or I will wring it from you by the lash;" exclaimed the indignant monarch; "Are these seemly words to utter to your sovereign in the presence of his nobles?"

"I am but the echo of your own loyal and devoted son, M. de Valois;" replied the unabashed buffoon; "Henry the dauphin, at his own board, has so declared it to his partisans."

"Say you so;" shouted Francis indignantly, as he sprang from the divan with an energy of which a moment previously he would have been incapable. "It is then

indeed time that I should assert myself. Summon the captain of my Scottish guards."

This order was instantly obeyed; and, forgetting alike his suffering and his debility, the king placed himself at the head of the royal archers, and proceeded to the apartments of his offending son. The dauphin had, however, been already apprised that he was betrayed, and when the indignant monarch entered the banqueting-room, he found it occupied only by a bevy of attendants who were removing the remnants of the repast. Unable to suppress the rage by which he was at the moment wholly mastered, Francis commanded his escort to throw the whole contents of the saloon out of the windows; not only the plate, glass, and furniture, but also the officers themselves; an order which was so promptly put into execution, that those members of the dauphin's household who could not effect their escape by other means, were compelled to leap from the balcony in order to save themselves from the pikes of the guard. The whole suite of apartments was then emptied, and every article which could be wrenched from its place flung into the court-yard; after which, exhausted by so unwonted an exertion, Francis returned pallid and trembling to his sick-couch.

Nor was his indignation merely momentary; the very sense of his rapid decay only rendered him the more morbidly sensitive to all that touched his dignity, or affected his authority; and so deeply was he wounded by the indelicate proceeding of the prince, that it was only at the expiration of a month that he could be induced, by the entreaties of the whole court, to permit

the dauphin to appear once more in his presence; nor would he even then consent to receive him, without enforcing the condition that no individual who had occupied a place at his board at the late ill-omened banquet, should venture to accompany him.

The loss of Boulogne had deeply mortified the king, who felt that its capture had been a disgrace to the French arms which it behoved him for the honour of his nation to efface; and, despite the fearfully exhausted state of the public finances, he resolved, if possible, to wrest it once more from the enemy. Aware, however, that so long as it was protected on its sea-ward side by the vessels of war which were stationed in the port, such an attempt must necessarily be attended by great uncertainty should he rely only on his land forces, he determined, while marching an army to its rescue, to avail himself at the same time of the services of a fleet which he had recently formed, and with which he proposed to attack the English on the high seas; or, failing in this attempt, to descend upon their coast in order to withdraw them from his own, and thus render the enterprise less hazardous.

In addition to this precaution, he despatched a strong body of troops to Scotland under M. de Lorges,[1] to the

[1] Jacques de Lorges, Earl of Montgomery, was the nephew of the Duke d'Aubigny, whom he succeeded, in 1543, in the command of the Scottish guard of Francis I. He was born in the duchy of Orleans; and was one of the ablest soldiers of the age. Two years previously he had come into possession of the earldom of Montgomery, which was his family inheritance. He it was who wounded the king with a burning log, while he was engaged in the hazardous pastime of besieging the hôtel of the Count de Saint-Pol at Paris,

support of the queen-mother, who was anxious to protect herself against the power of Henry VIII, and to prevent the marriage of the infant Princess Mary with his son. De Lorges had instructions to induce the Earl of Arran and the Cardinal-minister to invade the frontier of Northumberland; a mission in which he was so successful, that he had no sooner communicated his errand than he was authorized to assume the command of the Scottish army, amounting to about fifteen thousand men, with which he at once marched upon the frontier.

Meanwhile, the French fleet had assembled in the port of Havre, and the command of the expedition was intrusted to d'Annebaut, who was shortly afterwards joined by the Baron de la Garde with the war-gallies of the king, which had previously been stationed at Marseilles, whither he had himself returned immediately after the massacre of the Vaudois. The armament, exclusive of the five-and-twenty gallies, consisted of a hundred and fifty ships of various sizes, most of them trading vessels; and of sixteen transports; several Genoese carracks had also been procured to strengthen the fleet, but they were, unfortunately, lost at the mouth of the Seine from the incapacity of their pilots.

The preparations on land were equally important. By raising strong levies of lansquenets and Gascons, the army was augmented to a force of thirty-four thousand infantry, twelve hundred gensdarmes, and eight hundred light horsemen; and with this formidable body of troops

an incident which has been recorded in the body of this work. De Lorges, as he was constantly designated in France, died in 1559, in his 81st year.

Francis resolved, during the operations of his fleet, to attack Guines, lay waste the Terre d'Oye, and reduce the garrison of Boulogne by famine. The Terre d'Oye, whence the English drew their supplies, although inconsiderable in size, was extremely fertile, and abounded in pasture and cattle; it was, moreover, intersected by ditches which had enabled Lord Lisle, to whom the defence of the city had been intrusted, with the addition of a few redoubts, to defend it very efficiently; while the fortified town of Marcq, which was situated nearly in the centre of the district, and surrounded by marshy land, was strongly garrisoned; numerous outposts were stationed in the most exposed positions; and the arrangements of the English general had been so judiciously made, that the whole force could be brought to bear simultaneously upon any given point in case of attack.

By the commencement of July, the fleet was ready for sea; but before its departure the king resolved to visit Havre in order to inspect it; which he did in great state, attended by the whole of his court. The novelty of the spectacle so delighted the royal and noble ladies by whom he was accompanied, that Francis decided upon giving a banquet on board the Carraquon, a fine vessel of eight hundred tons burthen, carrying a hundred guns, and in every respect the most efficient ship of his navy. Preparations were accordingly made; the king's cooks and sewers were embarked two days previously; and on the appointed morning numerous barges lined with crimson damask, and richly cushioned, manned by the most skilful sailors of the fleet, and bearing the national

flag at their mast-head, conveyed the invited guests to the admiral's ship. As the monarch had, in deference to the expressed wishes of the court ladies, declined to embark under a salute, the heavy guns of the Carraquon, which had been prepared for this purpose, remained loaded, and the embarkation was effected amid no other demonstration than that of the amazed and delighted population of the town, who lustily cried "Noël" for their king, as they feasted their eyes upon the floating plumes, jewelled vestments, and brocaded draperies, which passed before them, glittering in the sunlight like a fairy pageant.

A temporary canopy had been erected over the deck of the vessel, beneath which the tables were spread with the costly viands and delicate wines prepared for a repast which was not, however, destined to be eaten; the officers of the royal kitchen having disregarded the repeated expostulations of those about them, and persisted, in order to secure the perfection at which they aimed in their several departments, in kindling fires in places ill adapted for such a purpose; an imprudence which was fated to be productive of a frightful catastrophe.

The king had scarcely assumed his seat, having on his right hand the queen his consort, and on his left the Queen of Navarre; and the nobles and ladies of the royal train were in their turn respectively engaged in taking possession of the places assigned to them by the court-usher, when flames were seen to issue from below, and in an instant all was horror and confusion. It fortunately chanced that several of the barges which had

conveyed the monarch and his suite on board, had remained in the immediate vicinity of the vessel, to be in readiness in the event of any of the august party requiring to be put on shore before the termination of the banquet; these were instantly brought along-side, and the king, the two queens, and all the ladies of their respective courts were rapidly conveyed from the vessel; together with the treasure-chest, which had been destined for the supply of the fleet. While this hurried embarkation was taking place, the other vessels in the port, having first despatched their boats to the assistance of the sufferers, made all sail to escape from so dangerous a vicinity; but, as they had been unprepared for an event of this nature, several of them were unable to effect their object, and sustained great damage from the guns of the Carraquon, when she shortly afterwards blew up.

Once assured of the safety of the king, d'Annebaut hoisted his flag on board the Maitresse, now become the principal vessel of the fleet; re-embarked the treasure; and having repaired, in so far as was possible, the injuries sustained by his ships, at once put to sea. On the eighteenth of the month he arrived off the Isle of Wight, where he anchored in sight of the English fleet, and despatched the Baron de la Garde with four gallies to reconnoitre the enemy: by advancing to St. Helen's, he was enabled to do this so effectually as to ascertain that it consisted of sixty large vessels of war fully manned and armed; and he had just finished his survey, when he discovered that fourteen of the number were already making sail towards him; nor was it without considerable difficulty that he escaped.

A short time subsequently, the whole fleet was in motion with a fair wind, bearing down upon the French ships, and several broadsides were fired in the hope of bringing them to a closer engagement; but though d'Annebaut returned the fire, he did not deem it prudent to advance, being unacquainted with the nature of the coast; and thus, although the cannonade was continued for a considerable time, little injury was sustained on either side. The mortification of the French admiral was, however, excessive, when he discovered that the Maitresse, which had struck on leaving the port of Harfleur, was so seriously damaged that she leaked in several places, and was wholly unserviceable; once more, therefore, he was compelled to transfer his flag and the jeopardized treasure to a vessel of less calibre; while the disabled ship returned to Havre to be repaired.

On the following morning a dead calm enabled d'Annebaut to resume the engagement with his gallies; and throughout the space of an hour a brisk fire was maintained on both sides. Meanwhile his larger vessels, profiting by the tide, were enabled without entering the channel, to approach sufficiently near to bring the enemy within range; and the English king, who had come in person to Portsmouth to watch the operations of the hostile fleets, had the mortification of seeing the Mary Rose, a noble ship, carrying seven hundred men, sunk by the well-served guns of the French. This was, however, the last triumph they were destined to achieve, as the turn of the tide compelled the gallies to make a precipitate retreat, during which they were unable to return the fire of the enemy, by whom they were hotly

pursued; they, however, succeeded in securing the safety of the main fleet by their skilful manœuvring; and d'Annebaut, convinced that it was impossible to renew the attack with any prospect of advantage while the English remained in their present position, resolved to make a descent on the coast of Sussex, in order to induce them to abandon it. The stratagem proved unsuccessful, as the king, satisfied that they could not possess themselves of any important point of the coast, all of which were carefully defended, suffered them to land unmolested at Brighton and New Haven, where they destroyed the huts of the fishermen, and being unable to do any further mischief, re-embarked, and returned to the Portsmouth roads.

Enraged by the immobility of the English fleet, which persisted in retaining its position, d'Annebaut next determined to effect a landing on the Isle of Wight, where he accomplished his purpose with equal facility; the English having prudently withdrawn from it all that could render its capture valuable. A few soldiers and about a hundred peasants alone opposed the disembarkation of the enemy, and they were, after a brief and useless struggle, overpowered; but, once in possession of their conquest, the French were at a loss to decide upon the use to which it might be applied. A council was held, at which the expediency of retaining possession of the island was discussed, until it should be ransomed by the surrender of Boulogne; but this chimera was soon abandoned, when it was remembered that the troops who must be left to protect it, could not long contend against the force which would be brought against them, denuded

as it was of every description of mural defence; and this question was scarcely decided when d'Annebaut ascertained that a considerable reinforcement was expected by the English fleet, a piece of intelligence which determined him to return to France. He accordingly abandoned the conquered territory; and, regaining his ships, set sail for Boulogne, whither he was followed by the vessels of whose advent he had been apprised.

Once more the roar of cannon pealed over the waves; but after a brisk and well-sustained fire of two hours, when the hostile fleets were at too great a distance to render it effectual, they eventually separated; d'Annebaut returned to the port of Havre, and the vessels of the English to their old anchorage: and so terminated the naval contest between the two countries, which, although it had been productive of no result to either, had nevertheless been the cause of an enormous outlay to both.

CHAPTER XX.

[1545.]

MILITARY OPERATIONS BEFORE BOULOGNE—THE COUNT D'AUMALE IS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED—THE GERMAN LEVIES OF HENRY VIII. ARRIVE AT LIEGE—FRANCIS I. OPPOSES THEIR PASSAGE—DEATH OF THE DUKE D'ORLEANS—INVASION OF THE TERRE D'OYE—A TREATY OF PEACE IS CONCLUDED BETWEEN ENGLAND AND FRANCE—THE EMPEROR REFUSES TO CEDE THE DUCHY OF MILAN TO THE FRENCH CROWN—FRANCIS STRENGTHENS HIS FRONTIERS—DEATH OF LUTHER—THE EMPEROR MAKES WAR UPON THE PROTESTANT PRINCES—HORRIBLE PERSECUTION OF THE LUTHERANS IN FRANCE—FRANCIS I. AS A MONARCH AND A MAN—DEATH OF HENRY VIII.—LAST ILLNESS OF FRANCIS I.—DEATH OF FRANCIS I.—THE CHAMBER OF THE DAUPHINESS—ACCESSION OF HENRY II.

CHAPTER XX.

[1545.]

While the French fleet had been engaged in its unsuccessful expedition, Francis resolved, in order to prevent the garrison of Boulogne from receiving supplies by sea, which would have rendered the devastation of the Terre d'Oye comparatively useless, to erect a fort that should command the harbour. This erection was entrusted to the Maréchal de Biez, who held the command in Picardy; but, through the ignorance of the engineer who selected the site, it proved a complete failure; and, to complete the annoyance of the king, as it was about to be roofed in, the English garrison made a sudden sortie; and after a sharp skirmish, during which the maréchal, having had his horse shot under him, fought on foot at the head of his troops with a gallantry that for a time promised to prove successful, compelled the French troops to a retreat, which they did not effect before they had sustained considerable loss.

Shortly afterwards, De Biez was informed that a convoy was about to pass from Calais to the besieged garrison, upon which he established his camp on the height of

St. Lambert, in order to impede its arrival. Several skirmishes took place while he occupied this post, and during one of these the Count d'Aumale was so seriously wounded that his recovery was considered almost a miracle. During the affray he received so vigorous a thrust from the pike of an English officer, that the weapon, which struck him between the nose and the right eye, broke off short in the wound, leaving the iron and a portion of the wood firmly fastened in his head. Nevertheless, the young prince still retained his seat, and in the extremity of his agony dug his spurs into the flanks of his charger, which galloped furiously towards the French camp, where he was immediately lifted from the saddle and conveyed to his tent. The operation which ensued was a formidable one; but the count, by his firm endurance of the consequent suffering, so ably seconded the skill of the surgeon, that in a short time he was declared convalescent.

Meanwhile the troops whom Henry VIII. had levied in Germany had arrived at Fleurine, a village near Liege; and Francis, in order to prevent their further progress, at once detached three divisions of his army to Guise, Champagne, and Messières, to cover his frontier. They then demanded a passage through the territories of the emperor, which was definitively refused; and thus, finding themselves impeded on all sides, after having been detained for three weeks at Fleurine, the Germans began to clamour for their pay, and their demands remaining unsatisfied, they disbanded themselves, and returned home.

Anxious to expedite the capture of Boulogne, the king

soon afterwards arrived in person at the Abbey of Toret-Moutiers, between Abbeville and Montreuil, accompanied by the two princes. Unhappily, the plague was then raging in the environs; and the Duke d'Orleans, dissatisfied with the apartment which had been prepared for him in one of the houses of the village, selected another, of which he signified that he should take possession. The owner of the dwelling endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, by informing him that it was rife with the infection, the last three persons by whom it had been occupied having successively died there. With his usual recklessness, however, the duke adhered to his resolution, declaring that such a circumstance could not affect him, as there had never been an instance of a prince of the blood falling a victim to the pestilence. He accordingly passed the night in this fatal chamber; on the following morning unequivocal symptoms of the disease betrayed themselves; the skill of the physicians proved powerless; and in the course of a few days he ceased to breathe.

The grief of the king was excessive; his ambition as well as his affection had been bound up in his younger son; and the prince had no sooner expired than he left the village which had proved so fatal to his hopes, and established himself in a hamlet at the other extremity of the forest of Crecy.

Whilst Francis was still absorbed in the deep and bitter grief by which he had thus been so suddenly overwhelmed, the Maréchal de Biez announced his intention of attacking the fortifications erected by the English in the Terre d'Oye; an enterprise of so much danger, that

it was no sooner publicly known, than crowds of the young nobles, anxious to share in the honour of so adventurous an attempt, hastened to the camp; and the Count d'Enghien, newly risen from his sick-bed, the Duke d'Aumale, the Count de Laval, the Duke de Nevers, and M. de la Trémouille, were among the foremost. The principal fort was attacked by the old French bands, under M. de Tais, and taken by assault; when the victors made a cruel use of the success for which they were indebted to their superior numbers, by putting the whole garrison to the sword. M. de Brissac, who commanded the van-guard, consisting of several troops of gensdarmes, all the light cavalry, and a strong force of foot-soldiers, marched meanwhile upon the town of Marcq; but he had not proceeded more than half a league when he encountered a body of two thousand English who were advancing to the relief of the beleaguered fort. After a desperate resistance these also were defeated, being unable long to cope with so unequal an enemy; and as no further impediment presented itself, the French troops continued to advance, pillaging and burning down all the villages, until they reached the gates of the town.

Here, however, they received a check. The bridges which had been prepared for the passage of the troops across the ditches had been forgotten; torrents of rain rendered the environs of Marcq one wide marsh; and they were reluctantly compelled to retire from before the walls of the threatened town, in order to secure their own safety.

The fortress which De Biez had constructed was, mean-

while, finished; and the English garrison made continual sallies in the hope of taking it: constant skirmishes occurred in consequence, which involved a serious loss on both sides, but no decisive result ensued; and both monarchs began to weary of a war which, while it exhausted their finances and weakened their armies, could not terminate favourably for either.

The energy of the French king was, moreover, shaken by the calamity which had befallen him; he saw the noble troops, that it had cost him so much exertion to raise, rapidly perishing alike under the weapons of the enemy and the attacks of the insidious disease which had reached his camp; he foresaw many difficulties in the completion of a new treaty with the emperor, now rendered necessary by the death of the Duke d'Orleans; and he became morbidly conscious of the failure of all his enterprises. Under such circumstances, therefore, he resolved rather to enter into a negotiation with the English king, than to persist longer in so unavailing a contest.

Nor was Henry VIII. less anxious than himself to terminate the war. The immense outlay which it had occasioned could produce no remunerative return; while he moreover apprehended that the absence of so large a body of troops might occasion him much embarrassment, should the Scotch army, as he had some reason to apprehend, profit by the opportunity to invade his frontiers. He was alarmed also by the attitude assumed at this period by Charles V, who had convoked his council, and was making preparations for a war against the Protestant princes of the League. Aware that he was personally as obnoxious to the court of Rome as the German

Reformers, he began to apprehend that, should the emperor prove successful, the result might be fatal to himself; and thus, as a French courtier wittily remarked, a peace might be easily negotiated, one monarch being anxious to secure it, and the other compelled to do so.

Commissioners were accordingly appointed on both sides, who met midway between Ardres and Guines; and on the 7th of June, 1546, a treaty of peace was signed between France and England; in which Henry VIII, after some difficulty, consented that the Scotch should be included, provided they saw fit to avail themselves of it within the space of thirty days. By the conditions of this treaty, Francis bound himself to pay off all the arrears of the pensions claimed by the English king, and to continue them during eight years; as well as to reimburse him for the expenses of the war, amounting to the sum of two millions of golden crowns, before the anniversary of St. Michael in 1554, at which period Henry VIII. was to deliver over to his officers the city of Boulogne.

The death of the Duke d'Orleans, as Francis had foreseen, afforded a new opportunity for the display of that selfish policy which formed so prominent a feature in the character of the emperor. At the close of the year 1545, he had despatched d'Annebaut and the Chancellor Olivier[1] to Charles to engage him in a new treaty, which

[1] François Olivier de Lieuville, a talented and eloquent magistrate, was president of the parliament of Paris, when Francis I. created him Chancellor of France in 1545. During the reign of Henry II, the influence of Diane of Poitiers deprived him of the seals; but he was recalled to court by Francis II. He died in 1560.

might replace that of Crespy; but they were totally unsuccessful. He felt or affected a deep regret at the untimely death of the young prince who was so shortly to have been his son-in-law, but at once declared without hesitation, that the event which he deplored had released him from all his engagements; that he never had, and never would, acknowledge the claims of the French king to the duchy of Milan, which Francis had, moreover, personally renounced upon two separate occasions; and that he considered himself perfectly absolved from all the obligations to which the treaty of Crespy would, under other circumstances, have bound him; although he had no desire to enter into renewed hostilities with France, unless he should be compelled to do so.

With this ambiguous reply, the baffled ambassadors returned to court; and Francis, conscious that he was not at that period in a position to enforce his demands, and more anxious to repel aggression than to provoke a war which he was unable to sustain, suffered the declaration of his wily rival to remain without retort; and employed the remainder of the year in inspecting and strengthening his frontier-fortresses, which he did so effectually, that he was enabled to await without apprehension the result of the new struggle in which Charles was about to engage.

The death of Luther,[1] at the commencement of this year, was a severe blow to the Reformers, and an equally great source of rejoicing to the pope; although it by no means disposed him to second the violent designs of the emperor

[1] Luther died at Eysleben, the place of his birth, on the 18th of February, 1546, aged sixty-three years.

against the new religion. He was well aware that the zeal which Charles affected for the church had in every case been made subservient to his own interests; and he considered himself aggrieved, moreover, by the fact that after he had invested his son Pietro Luigi Farnese with the duchies of Parma and Placenza, the emperor had refused to recognise or to ratify his sovereignty; and consequently, even when he entered into a treaty with that monarch for the extirpation of the Reformers, he could not divest himself of a distrust which rendered him less energetic in the cause than he might otherwise have been. Charles, with his usual subtle policy, had been anxious to keep his intentions secret, until he could overwhelm his victims by some sudden *coup-de-main*, a desire which increased the suspicions of the pontiff; and accordingly he had no sooner pledged himself to assist in this religious war, than he ordered public prayers to be put up in Rome for the success of the undertaking.

Had Francis, at this period, come to the succour of the Protestant princes whom he had formerly protected, there can be little doubt but that he would have been enabled to ensure his kingdom thenceforward from all attempts at aggression on the part of the emperor. Many of those about him endeavoured to convince him of this fact, and of the magnanimity of assisting the oppressed, who were about to contend not only for their religious liberty, but also for that of their several states, by which alone the independence of all Europe could be secured against the insatiable ambition of Charles. They represented to him that he could do this without any

breach of honour, as they were his allies, and had a right to look to him for help; that, moreover, his interference in their behalf could not affect his conscience, inasmuch as the emperor had declared that he was not about to punish them for their schism, but for their rebellion against his authority; and that it well became a great monarch to uphold the cause of the weak against the strong.

These arguments, however, availed nothing; the languor of premature old age, a dread of increasing responsibility, and the persuasions of the Cardinal de Tournon, who was constantly about his person, rendered the king not only unwilling to reply to the appeal of the German princes, but even incited him to renew within the limits of his own kingdom the atrocious persecution of the Reformists which had already affixed an indelible stigma upon his reign.

Once more the stake and the rack did their deadly office; inoffensive citizens, convicted of an adherence to Lutheranism, were seized in their houses, loaded with chains, put to the torture, and finally burnt alive. A few were suspended by their armpits, in front of the pile on which their co-religionists were expiring under a slow fire, then publicly flogged, and finally flung into different monasteries, where the mind dare not follow them; four escaped with castigation and banishment; and others were imprisoned for life. As some of these victims of intolerance were on their way to Meaux, a weaver of their own persuasion followed the wagon in which they were performing their melancholy journey, and exhorted them to meet with faith and resignation all the sufferings

which they might be called upon to endure, remembering that they would have a mighty and abiding reward in heaven. He did but add another martyr to the number. He was seized by the archers of the provost, bound with cords, and flung into the vehicle with those who were already condemned to death.

It is fearful to pursue so terrible a subject; but the faithful chronicler has no alternative. We will, therefore, record it in the very words of Theodore de Bèze, in his Ecclesiastical History, Book I. p. 51—53.[1]

"Arrived at Meaux, they underwent the extraordinary question in all its cruelty, which they suffered with such resignation, that they never accused any of their brethren. On the 7th of September they were led to execution, the tongue of Etienne Mangin having been previously cut out, notwithstanding which he thrice exclaimed loudly and intelligibly, 'God's name be blessed!' He was then drawn upon a hurdle, as was also Guillaume le Clerc, the rest following in carts, to the market-place, where they were hoisted up and burnt upon fourteen gibbets, placed in a circle. Thus, face to face, they encouraged each other, and mingled their prayers and praises, which were, however, interrupted by the priests and the populace, who shouted aloud like madmen, *O salutaris hostia!* and *Salve Regina.* This accomplished, on the morrow, the 8th of the month, Picard, (Doctor of the Sorbonne,) in order to complete his triumph, went with a magnificent procession to the spot where the fire was still smouldering, preaching under a

[1] Quoted from Sismondi.

canopy of cloth of gold; and said, among other things, after having displayed great violence, that it was essential to the salvation of all to believe that these fourteen condemned persons were damned in the bottomless pit of hell; and that should an angel from heaven come and declare the contrary, they must reject his evidence, as God would not be God if he did not damn them to eternity."

We dare not venture to comment upon such a passage of history as this; but surely it offers a fearful warning to after-ages. Moreover, the pyres which had been lighted, and the racks which had been set in motion in the capital, were emulated in the provinces; many other victims, and some of these men of exemplary lives and high literary attainments, fell victims to the atrocious persecution which disgraced the closing reign of the quasi-demigod of many an historian. The "chivalrous Francis I."—the "First Gentleman of France"—the monarch whose name has for three centuries been as a landmark of glory in the record of the French annals—to what conviction does a perfect knowledge of his real character lead? Surely but to this: that he was vain even to puerility in his youth, sensual even to profligacy in his manhood, and bigoted even to brutality in his decline. Conscious of his own enormities, he took refuge in a cruel superstition; and sought to win heaven by the tears, and groans, and agonies of his fellow-men. While he clung to his vices, feasted with his mistresses, laughed at the ribald jests of his obsequious courtiers, and wrung from his exhausted people the hard-earned produce of their industry, he strove to

blind himself with the belief that all would be forgiven in his zeal for the Church, and that his own transgressions would be washed out in the blood of his sectarian victims.

It has been the fashion with modern authors to pass lightly over this frightful episode of the reign of Francis I. It destroys the illusion which attaches to his name; it renders him less attractive as a sovereign; and converts the splendid sensualist into a gloomy and heartless barbarian. But let the thinking mind fall back upon the whole chain of his previous career, and its close will scarcely prove matter of astonishment. The morals of the age were unhappily lax; the example of the most exalted of the priesthood venal, profligate, and degrading; Religion, even by the several pontiffs, made subservient to expediency; the cardinals more celebrated in the annals of gallantry than in those of piety; the ambition of the great nobles confined to personal aggrandizement; and the bulk of the people buried in ignorance and superstition.

That there were glorious exceptions in all ranks is most true; but these have almost universally been overlooked,—many, too many of them, altogether forgotten. The pure gold sinks to the bottom of the stream, while the more worthless dross rises and sparkles upon the surface of the current. We admit, therefore, that the vices of Francis may find some extenuation in the character of the age, and the nature of his education; but we repeat, that those who have recorded only the brilliant and attractive portions of his career, and have wilfully and advisedly buried his backslidings in oblivion,

HENRY VIII.

ENGRAVED BY PERMISSION FROM THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE COLLEGE HALL

have not done their duty either to themselves or to those who may be influenced by their researches.

The flame and the wheel were still in full operation in France, when, in January, 1547, news arrived at St. Germain-en-Laye, where the court was then sojourning, of the death of Henry VIII; an event which produced the most fatal effect alike upon the moral and physical temperament of the French king. He had long indulged the hope that Henry, whose rupture with the emperor had rendered it necessary for him to strengthen his position, would be desirous of entering into a closer alliance with himself; while at the same time the similarity, not only of their ages, but also in many respects of their several characters, combined with a consciousness that the disease under which he was then suffering was daily becoming more virulent, filled him with alarm. He felt a conviction that his own end was approaching; and he became nervous and depressed. He commanded that a solemn funeral service should be performed at the cathedral of Notre Dame in honour of the deceased monarch, a ceremony which took place with great pomp; and then, in order to divert the melancholy that was rapidly gaining upon him, accompanied by a slow fever which robbed him of all rest, Francis, who could no longer brook a moment of inaction, removed to La Muette, a country-house which he had recently embellished, on the borders of the forest of St. Germain. There he sojourned for a whole week; but his mind was in so unsettled a state that he could not long remain upon one spot; and he accordingly proceeded to Villepreux, where an increase of his fever induced him to travel the following

day to Dampierre, near Chevreuse; and thence he pursued his way in order to pass the period of Lent at Limours. Throughout the whole of this time he was accompanied by the court, but even his favourites now sought in vain to arouse him from the lethargy into which he was rapidly falling. Nowhere could he find peace; and after having spent three days at Limours, he once more removed to Rochefort, where he endeavoured to amuse himself by hunting. To this violent exercise, however, his strength was no longer equal; and every evening his fever increased to a degree which alarmed those about him so greatly that they urged his return to St. Germain-en-Laye.

After some difficulty the physicians succeeded in obtaining his consent to this measure, by representing that he could travel slowly, and indulge in his favourite pursuit by the way; and he accordingly left Rochefort for Rambouillet, where he had decided to remain only one night; but the game proved so plentiful and the sport so exciting, that he was induced to change his resolution. Two or three days were consequently spent in field sports, in which once more Catherine de' Medici participated; but the fever of the king, which had hitherto been intermittent, became, by reason of this perpetual exertion, continuous; and his malady increased so rapidly, that it was found impossible for him to proceed further.

Once apprised of his danger, Francis summoned the dauphin to his sick-bed, and conversed with him at intervals for several hours; giving him the most wholesome advice concerning the future government of the

kingdom over which he must so soon be called upon to rule; and consequently, like many other monarchs, he, in this supreme moment, gainsaid, in almost every particular, the system which he had himself pursued. He recommended him to diminish the public taxes under which the nation was then groaning; to be guided in all things by the Cardinal de Tournon and the Admiral d'Annebaut; and, above all, to exclude from his confidence the Connétable de Montmorenci and the family of the Duke de Guise. He then received the sacraments of the Church; and his persecutions of the Protestants had apparently convinced him so thoroughly of his own salvation, that he expired peacefully, while the ashes of his victims were still floating between earth and heaven.

To say that he died unregretted would be to assert a fallacy. Too many interests were interwoven with his existence to render such an event possible. He had, moreover, during the later period of his life, laboured to replenish the national treasury; in which attempt, despite the enormous outlay consequent upon the various wars that he had undertaken, and the expensive character of his court, in which to the last he introduced no retrenchment, he had so far succeeded as to bequeathe to his successor the sum of four hundred thousand crowns. But his death was not accompanied, like that of Louis XII, with the tears and regrets of his subjects. Three great events alone had signalized his reign—the victory of Marignano, the restoration of literature, and the struggle which he had sustained against Charles V.

And what had been the actual result even of these? The glory of Marignano had been quenched at Pavia; at

which period his reign, as affected his own greatness, may well be said to have terminated; for his after-triumphs were all inconsequent and valueless. He never again hazarded his personal safety in an open engagement, although he was rigorous in his punishment of those through whose errors or want of courage he failed in the accomplishment of his designs; and it was therefore the nation which fought, and bled, and suffered, not its sovereign. He invited learned men to his court; lured them thither by the brightest prospects and the most extravagant promises; and then, not content with disappointing the hopes that he had raised, not only ceased to encourage them when they no longer ministered to his own gratification and that of his favourites, but even persecuted them for their religious opinions, and abandoned them to the stake, to the rack, and to the anathemas of a bigoted priesthood.

That he manfully met, and boldly opposed, the usurpation of Charles V. is quite true; but to what abiding benefit had he turned this opposition? It had been throughout rather a personal struggle than a great question of national policy. Charles was the only sovereign of whose prowess he was jealous, and whose supremacy wounded his pride alike as a sovereign and as a soldier. He had expended millions, and sacrificed a fearful amount of human life, only to leave his kingdom to his son as he had received it from his predecessor. He had gained no territory, secured no advantage, realized no triumph. It is certain that he had driven the conqueror of Germany, Asia, Africa, and Turkey from his kingdom, but it must also be remembered that he had

been unable to arrest his march even to the very neighbourhood of his capital.

While the king was in the last agony, the dauphin, who, whatever might be his failings, was endowed with a depth of feeling which caused him for the moment to forget all his real or imagined wrongs, cast himself in a fit of bitter grief upon the bed of his wife; while Catherine de' Medici herself, seated upon a low stool, remained with her face buried in her hands, like one utterly oppressed by sorrow; and did not reply to his lamentations by a single syllable. There were, however, other watchers in that spacious room, as anxious although less absorbed than either the future sovereign or his wife. The one was Diane de Poitiers, who with flashing eyes and hurried step traversed the floor, listening to every sound, and awaiting from moment to moment the announcement which was to make her a queen in all save the empty name; and the other was the Count d'Aumale, the friend and favourite of the dauphin, who in his impatience, repeatedly passed from the chamber of the dauphiness to the ante-room of the dying king; exclaiming in an accent of undisguised triumph from time to time; "The lady-killer is going!"

Francis finally expired on the 31st of March, 1547, and was buried with a magnificence far surpassing anything which had yet been witnessed in France; eleven cardinals assisted at his obsequies, and the ceremony extended over two-and-twenty days. The bodies of his two sons, the dauphin Francis and Charles Duke d'Orleans, were conveyed to St. Denis together with his own; and Henry II. succeeded to the vacant throne.

Only a few months elapsed ere Montmorenci was once more all-powerful at the court; the unhappy queen under the protection of her imperial brother in Spain; and the Duchess d'Etampes an exile on one of her estates. The bâton which had been broken over the coffin of Francis I. had involved more changes than that which placed the crown that he had worn so proudly upon the brow of his surviving son.

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